

MAN IS AN ARTIST

COMPIRIZED



JOHN BRADFORD

MAN IS AN ARTIST

*The Story of Painting Sculpture and Architecture
through the Ages for Boys and Girls*

*With many illustrations in half-tone
and with line drawings by the author*



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TO
BARBARA
JENNIFER
AND
MICHAEL

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Before You Begin

SOME wise man once said that you cannot get a quart into a pint pot, and it is just as impossible to tell you in a small book like this everything about the wonderful works that man has carved, painted, and built in every country and in every age for thousands of years. With regret, I have had to leave out all mention of India, China, Peru, Africa, and many other countries whose artists and craftsmen have contributed so much to the history of art.

I hope that what I have written will make you want to learn more about pictures, sculpture, and architecture, and about the men who spent their lives creating the beautiful things which we are able to enjoy to-day.

Small though this book is, the writing of it was no light task, but with the willing and valuable assistance of Mr William Bainbridge, who patiently read every word, checked every detail, disagreed with much that I wrote, and offered advice (which I did not always follow !), it was made considerably easier and pleasanter.

J. B.

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I. *Pictures in the Caves*

NO one really knows when men first began to draw pictures or to carve figures from pieces of bone and stone. For many thousands of years men decorated the things they used and wore every day, such as pots and pans, bowls and cups, knife-blades and shields, helmets, robes, and other things.

It is quite likely that prehistoric man's first attempts at decoration were carried out on his own body, which he painted some bright colour, hoping that his appearance would frighten the life out of his enemy, who, possibly having a similar idea, may have daubed his body also with equally brilliant colours. Even to-day some of the more backward tribes of Africa paint their bodies in the most vivid colours.

In many of our museums are some broken weapons, tools, and fragments of pottery made by our early ancestors, but they tell us very little about the way they lived. All we know for certain is that they were great and skilful hunters. They had to be, for, knowing nothing at all about sowing and reaping crops, their food-supply depended upon their cleverness in hunting.

But since we know so little about these people, we are at liberty to try to imagine what their lives were like, and we can assume that, like all primitive peoples, they were easily frightened by things they did not understand. Fear must have filled every moment of their lives. They probably believed that every stone and rock, each tree and bush, all the clouds and hills, were inhabited by spirits which had only one desire, and that was to do these poor, ignorant savages some harm. The thunder was the growling of a very angry, unknown, invisible, and all-powerful being, much stronger than themselves. The flashes of lightning were his spears of flame that burned forests, split rocks, and sometimes slew men. If the day's hunting had been unsuccessful it was because some god or spirit was displeased with them.

Soon there may have entered into men's minds the idea that angry gods should be soothed and pleased, and this idea was the beginning of a crude religion of fear, in which gods

were begged not to be angry, but to help poor men in their hunt for food.

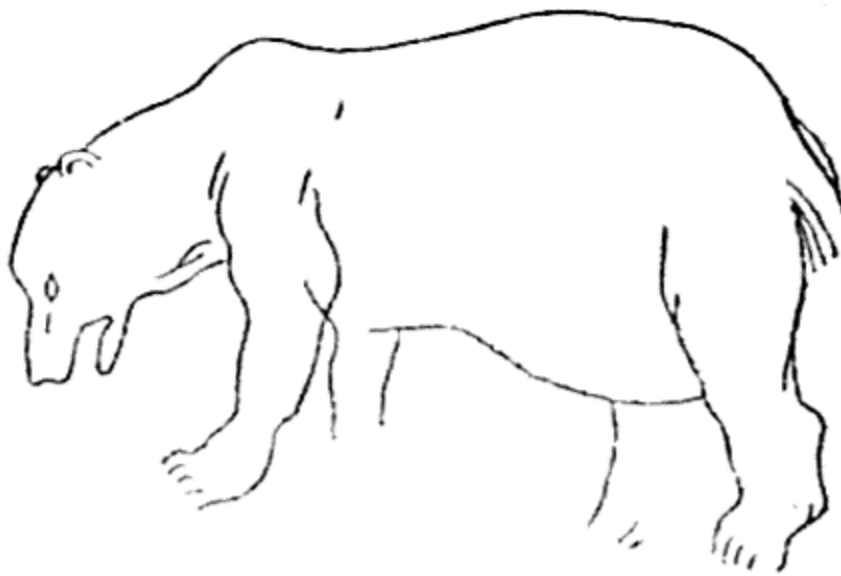
The oldest men of the tribes became the first priests, and their 'prayer-meetings' were held in the innermost depths of the largest and darkest caves, where daylight never entered and men walked by the light of a smoking torch. Here our forefathers gathered and listened while the old men muttered prayers and spells to ward off evil spirits, and implored the gods to help them in their hunting.

During one such meeting, some fifteen or twenty thousand years ago, a man took a sharp stone and with it scratched on the walls of the cave a picture of an animal, perhaps a deer or a bison.

His friends were, quite possibly, greatly alarmed by such magic. Never before had they seen anything like this. With startled eyes they stared at this image of the animal they



1. CAVE DRAWING OF A BISON



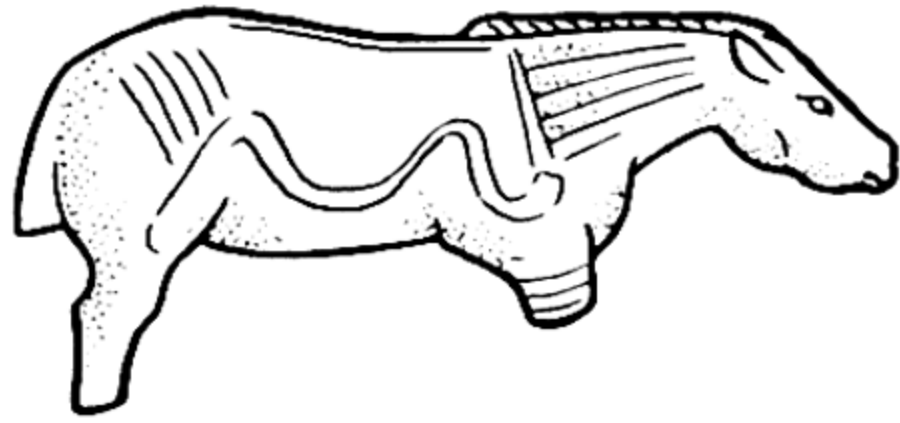
2. CAVE BEAR

had hunted in vain all day long. It seemed so lifelike that they expected it to leap from the wall and go charging through the cave. Yelling their hunting-cries, they took up their spears and cudgels and began to beat the picture of the animal, believing that in doing so they were attacking the living beast.

The artist, encouraged by such unexpected and noisy praise of his work, decided that a larger and better picture would mean better luck in the hunt. So, with paints made from earth, charcoal, and burnt bones, he drew more and bigger pictures in red, blue, orange, and black. To-day these pictures, drawn by untaught and unskilled men, still arouse our admiration and wonder.

One day in 1868 a little girl about four years old went with her father into a cave in Altamira, in Northern Spain. Her father busied himself searching for stone axe-heads and bone spears, for this cave had once been the home of some of the

hunters we have just read about. She grew tired of waiting for him. Taking a lighted candle, she went off to explore by herself. She returned a little later, very excited and frightened, saying that she had seen a picture of a strange animal, very much like a bull, on a wall deep inside the cave.



3. IVORY CARVING OF A HORSE

This thrilling event must have made children all over Europe start a careful search of caves, for shortly after two boys found more of these pictures in a cave on the banks of the Dordogne river, in France. Since then many more have been found (whether by children or not I do not know) in Italy and in other parts of France and of Spain. So far none has been found in this country.



4. STATUETTE OF A FAT LADY

Many of these pictures are extremely well drawn, and the artists must have had keen eyes and good memories, and have been very patient men, for they could never have drawn such lifelike pictures of animals if they had not spent many weary hours watching them and remembering every movement they made. I think they must have had a sense of fun, too, for they sometimes drew lions with three heads, or a wolf's head on a deer's body, and a horse was often given two tails! It is possible, however, that these 'funny' drawings had some religious meaning.

The prehistoric artist was quite clever also in carving in bone and ivory. He liked making images of animals rather than of human beings,



5. ARCHERS AND DANCERS

which is easily understood when you remember how important animals were in his daily life. His models of human figures are queer little things, and rather like comical dolls or toys. They represent fat, ugly people having little likeness to real men and

women. But in the cave pictures of human beings we are reminded of the pin-men most of us have drawn in our exercise-books.

Our earliest ancestor knew nothing about building with stone or brick. He made his home in caves or the tops of trees, where he could live and sleep without fear of being attacked by wild animals. In time he learned to make and use an axe, with which he cut down the stout limbs of trees and, tying them together, built a rough shelter which kept him



6. EARLY HOUSES

warm and dry and enabled him to leave the cold, damp cave for ever.

Eventually he gave up living apart from his neighbours and began to share his life with his fellow-men. They built round huts of mud and twigs on hill-sides and the higher plains, thus forming the first villages and hamlets. Wide trenches were dug around these groups of huts to keep away the wild animals. If the ground happened to be marshy the huts were built on piles (stout wooden posts) standing upright in the water or soft ground. As time went slowly by and men learned to trade with neighbouring tribes, these villages grew into small towns, with a busy market-place and well-made houses of wood and stone, and men began to enjoy the fruits of a rough and simple civilization.



7. A HOUSE ON PILES

Art began, we believe, as a servant of religion, and we shall see that for many centuries it was to serve religion in many different countries and in many different civilizations.



8. STAG HUNT

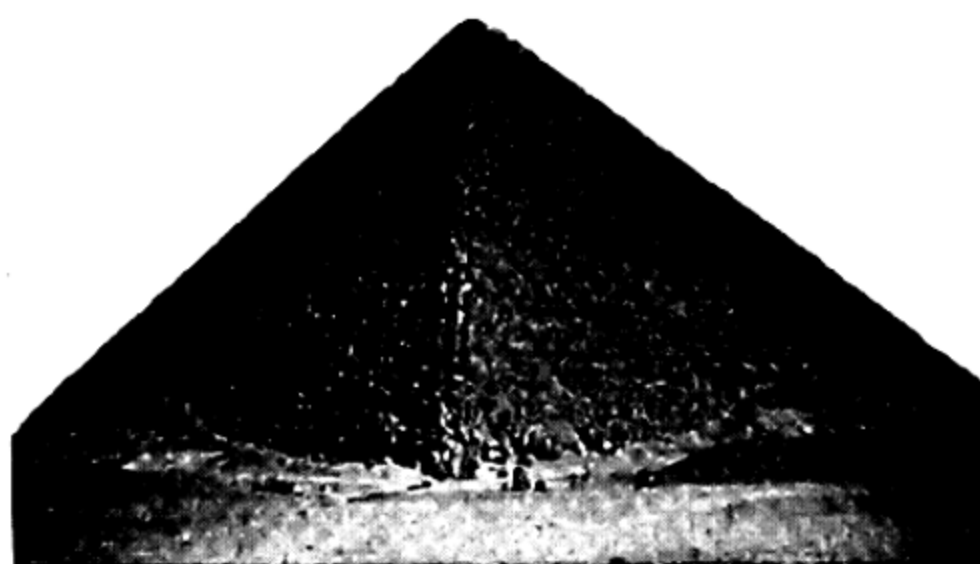
2. *Art in the Land of Temples and Tombs*

WE have taken a big stride across many thousands of years, leaving prehistoric man far behind us, and we are now in the midst of a civilization that was as wonderful and as complete in its way as our own. We are in Egypt in the time of the Pharaohs.

We think of Egypt as a land of ruined temples, mysterious tombs, of pyramids and the Sphinx, and miles and miles of golden sand. From out of this sand archæologists (men who dig up the buried past) have brought forth much wealth and treasure and beautiful works of art. They have uncovered long-hidden tombs and temples, and as a result of their patient work we have learned the history of a mighty and highly intelligent race, a history that is as wonderful and as unreal as a fairy-story.

But before we begin to dig beneath the sand let us first have a look at the oldest and best-preserved buildings in the world—the pyramids. There

are quite a number of pyramids in Egypt, some small, some very large. Some of them were built 3500 years before Christ was born, and were 2000 years old when Moses saw them as he led the Israelites out of Egypt, "the house of bondage." But we are interested here only in the largest of them, which is known as the Great Pyramid of Gizeh.



9. THE GREAT PYRAMID, GIZEH

This Great Pyramid covers an area of thirteen acres, being 755 feet long on each of its four sides and rising to a height of nearly 500 feet. If it helps you to imagine such a large space, try to picture four full-sized football-pitches with room for plenty of spectators.

The Great Pyramid is built of huge blocks of stone, each one at least thirty feet long and weighing between twenty-five and

fifty tons, and all these stones are fitted snugly together without any cement to hold them in place. So well do they fit that it is difficult to see where one stone touches the other. It took 300,000 men twenty years to erect this vast six-million-ton mountain of stone. It is a tomb made by many men for one man, a king named Khufu, or Cheops.

Originally it had a beautiful, smooth covering of polished granite, and against the intense blue of the desert sky the newly erected pyramid must have been a wonderful sight. But the granite has all gone, stripped off centuries ago for other buildings, and the naked blocks of stone now look like the steps of a giant's staircase.

The king, or Pharaoh, as he was called, was regarded by his subjects as a divine being. He was the all-powerful ruler of his land and people, the descendant of gods, a god himself. His subjects lived in houses made of sun-dried mud-and-straw bricks, and the king's palace, too, was built of the same material. It was not expected to last a long time, but it was strong enough to last him for as long as he lived. To the ancient Egyptians earthly things mattered little. More important to them was the life that came after death, and their time on earth was merely one of preparation for the life in the next world. So when a king died his body was carried from his brick palace and laid in a strong tomb of stone, known as "a house of eternity."

The Egyptians believed, as we Christians do, that when a man died his soul went on living. But they also believed that the soul, set free from the body, went on a long and dangerous journey to the Land of the Dead, where it was judged by the god Osiris, the Ruler of the Living and the Dead. If the man had lived a good life on earth, then he had an easy and comfortable time in the hereafter for three thousand years. After this nice long holiday his soul had to return to earth and take up its life in its former body. So you see how important it was that his body should be protected from damage and decay, and the only way to make sure that it would be kept safe was to put it in a very strong tomb.

To preserve it from decay the body was embalmed, anointed with sacred oils, wrapped in linen bands, laid in a stone coffin, and the coffin placed in a tomb. On the walls of the tomb were written prayers and spells to help the soul on its journey to the other world. It was also thought that if an image of the

dead man was made and placed in the tomb with the body, the soul would be sure to live for ever, being kept alive in and by the image. Sculptors carved a portrait of the dead man in granite, a material so hard that it would never perish. Very often statues of his friends, his wife and children, or a favourite servant were put in the tomb also, so that he would have plenty of good company in the next world. These portraits were as lifelike as possible, and we can be sure that the people they represented were really like their effigies. Artists painted on the walls incidents from the life of the dead man.



10. CARVED PORTRAIT OF
SETI I
British Museum.

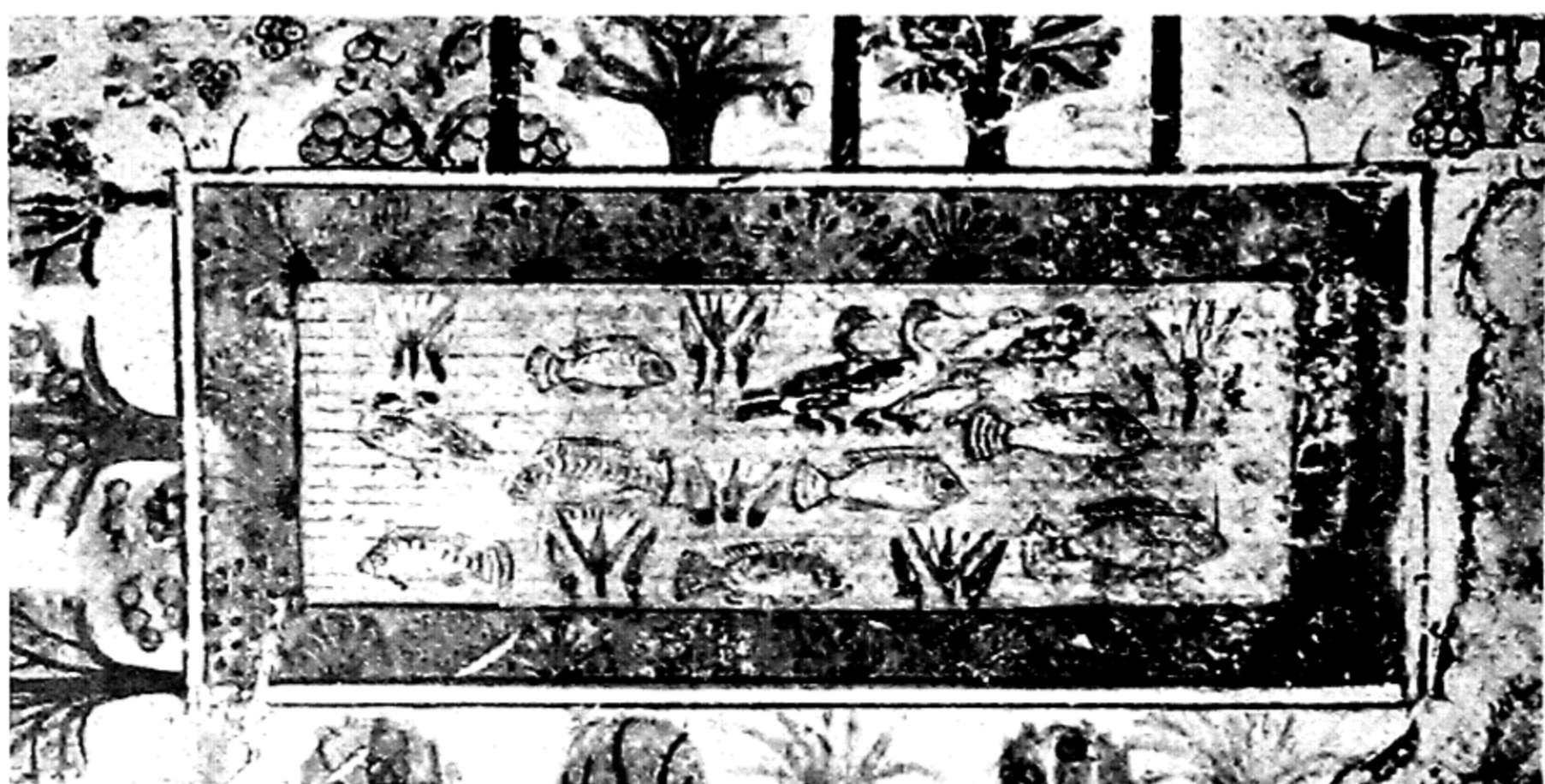
This method of making sure that they would enjoy life in the other world was adopted by many of the nobles, and the portraits carved and painted in their burial-chambers are among the most beautiful in Egyptian art. From these paintings we get a very good idea of how the people of ancient Egypt lived. We see men ploughing and reaping, pressing grapes for wine, building boats, wrestling and playing games. Scribes with writing-tablets in hand make notes of the amount of work done by the labourers in their charge. The nobleman receives gifts of cattle, water-fowl, and grain from his servants; or he sits in his garden listening to the music of harps.

Elsewhere we see him on a journey, being carried in a litter by his servants. The chief colours used were red, yellow, blue, brown, and green. Men and women both had red skins, the men being a little darker than the women.

At first glance these Egyptian wall-paintings appear strange and unnatural. They seem to be full of sharp angles and corners, and look more like the designs in a geometry exercise than pictures. One part of the human figure faces us squarely, while other parts are shown side-view. That was how the artist was

told to draw his human figures. He was not expected to produce a pretty picture with everything in it looking nice and 'real' and all in correct proportions. He had to obey strict rules taught him while he was apprenticed to a master-artist, and these rules said that only the most truthful and most perfect picture of the human body must be made.

The Egyptian artist's idea of truthfulness in drawing was to make his picture as simple as possible, in order that it could be quickly understood. He used the least possible amount of line, so that all we see is the mere outline shape of the figure, with enough detail of dress put in to tell us the rank of the person.



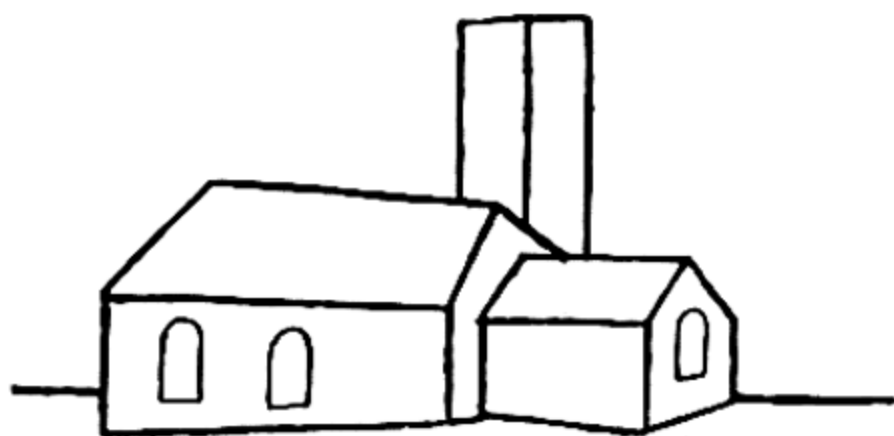
II. DUCKS ON A POND

From a tomb-painting at Thebes. British Museum.

To show the correct shape of a man's head he drew it side-view. The width of his chest is obviously seen at its best from the front. So we have a face in profile (with the eye as it would be seen from the front), while the upper part of the body faces us squarely. The arms and legs, to show the muscles and hinges of elbow and knee, are again drawn side-view. When we get used to these pictures we find the mixture of view-points rather pleasing, amusing, and very easy to understand. Everything that was important in the picture had to be shown clearly, and the artist obeyed the rules of his craft in the only way he knew.

We have a feeling, however, that he got more fun out of drawing and painting birds and animals and flowers than he did in portraying human figures. With the latter he had to be

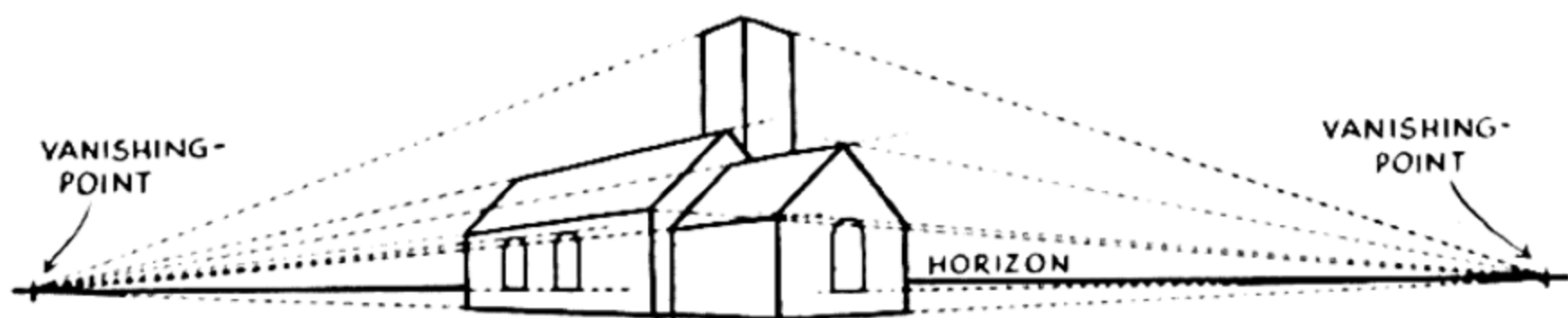
careful not to offend the priests by making his kings and gods look too much like ordinary people. Once these were finished, he must have turned with a sigh of relief to his animals and birds. Here he met with no rules or regulations, and he was very proud of his skill in painting all the minute details of leaves and petals and fur and feathers. His desire that we should admire his skill made him play strange tricks with his drawing. In the picture shown opposite the pond is viewed from above, but the ducks swimming on it are shown side-view. How else could he have let us see the shape of a duck and how well he could paint those lovely feathers? The scene is not a realistic picture drawn from Nature, but a beautiful design or pattern.



12. A DRAWING WITHOUT PERSPECTIVE

It is time now to introduce a word often used by people when they are talking about pictures—*perspective*. Perspective is the art of giving depth to a picture. When you sit down in your drawing-class with a piece of paper pinned to your board you already have the height and width of your picture. But there is no depth. So you start off with two dimensions all ready for you, but the third—the depth—is waiting to be created by you. Look at a picture of a street scene, and you will see that the houses on either side grow smaller as they go farther away from you. You feel that you are actually standing in the street or looking at it through a window. That is perspective carrying you right into the picture. Without perspective we get no sense of space or air, but only a flat picture in which all the different objects seem to have nothing to do with each other. The two little sketches may help you to understand what I am trying to tell you.

Now, the Egyptian artist knew nothing about perspective,



13. PERSPECTIVE TIDIES IT UP



14. PART OF A WALL-PAINTING FROM THE TOMB OF KHAEMWAST, THEBES
Note the bold 'perspective' lines. British Museum.

but he had his own method of telling us what was far away and what was near to him. The nearest objects in the picture shown here are drawn all on the same level at the bottom, and above them is a bold line. Objects in the middle distance (those between the nearest and the farthest away) are drawn above this line, with another bold line above them, and topping these two stages is the third, showing the most distant objects. Proportions meant little to the artist, and size was not used to indicate the nearness or the distance of an object or figure, but to tell us the importance of a person. For instance, in a picture of a king with his subjects the king is a large figure, while his subjects are shown as small creatures standing around him.



15. SEATED STATUE OF
KING AMEN-HOTEP III
British Museum.

The sculptor, like the painter, had to work according to rules laid down by the priests. All art in ancient Egypt was under the control of the priests, and they and

the Pharaohs were practically the only people who employed artists. The sculptor was told that a seated statue of a king must have his hands resting on his knees. If the king's wife were shown with him she must be a smaller figure, even if in real life she were much taller. If the figures were standing the man's hands must rest stiffly by his sides, and his left foot should be a little in front of the right. A woman must stand with her feet together.

When carving statues of the gods he had to be most careful not to offend either them or the priests. Horus, the sun-god, had to have a falcon's head on his human body; Anubis, the god of death, was always in the likeness of a jackal, or as a man with a jackal's head; Isis, the moon-goddess, liked to be seen sometimes with a cow's head with a moon-disc between the horns. And so it went on, with each of the two thousand gods and goddesses demanding that he or she be carved or painted with the correct head or symbol. With all his work so ordered to a set style and pattern, the sculptor had little chance to use his imagination and create anything that was new and different, but he managed to produce the most wonderful work for three thousand years, trying with every figure he carved to make it even more simple. His statues suggest ease and restfulness rather than action or movement. The only movement is in the arms or legs. The head is always set squarely on the shoulders, and is never shown turned.

Later there came a king, Amenhotep (Amenophis) IV, who decided it was time for a change. He said there weren't hundreds of gods at all, but only one, whom he called Aton. To show how sure he was of this and how much he honoured this god he changed his name to Akhenaton. He also abolished all the old rules of art. He did not want the usual type of statue that had been made for previous Pharaohs. He wanted something more natural—scenes of himself playing with his children or walking



16. THE JACKAL-
HEADED GOD ANUBIS
British Museum.

with his wife in his garden, and he insisted that his wife should be shown as large as himself. One can easily imagine the alarm and dismay he must have caused among the nobles and the priests of the old gods.

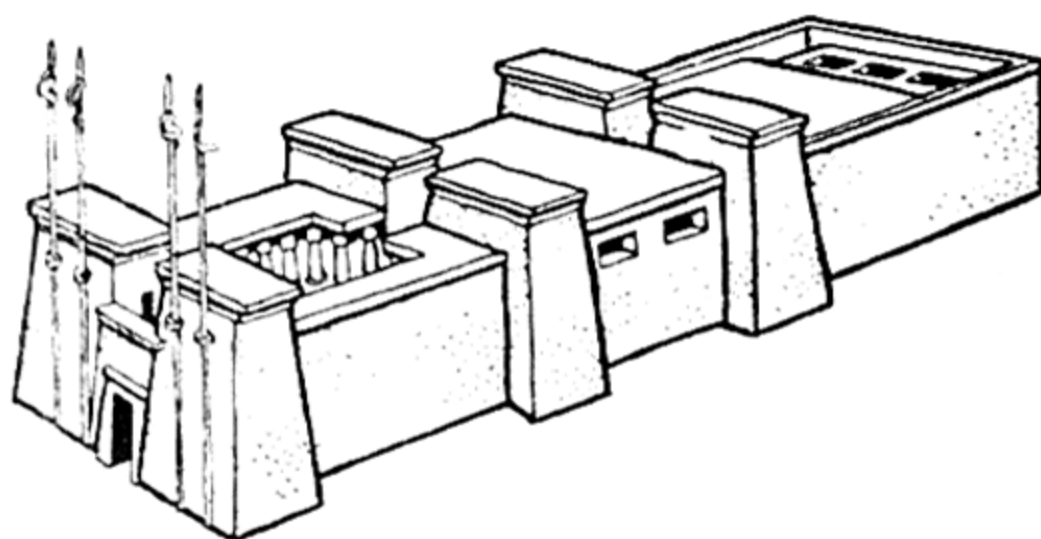


17. QUEEN NEFERT-ITI

But this change brought new life to artists, and they quickly and, apparently, gladly forsook the old styles, and quite suddenly began to create something new in sculpture. The realistic bust-portrait of *Nefert-iti*, the beautiful wife of Akhenaton, is an example of this new and welcome freedom in art. His successor, Tutankhamen, whose tomb was discovered in 1922, shared the former king's ideas, but during his brief reign there was a gradual return to the old ideas and the old gods. Once these were firmly re-established,

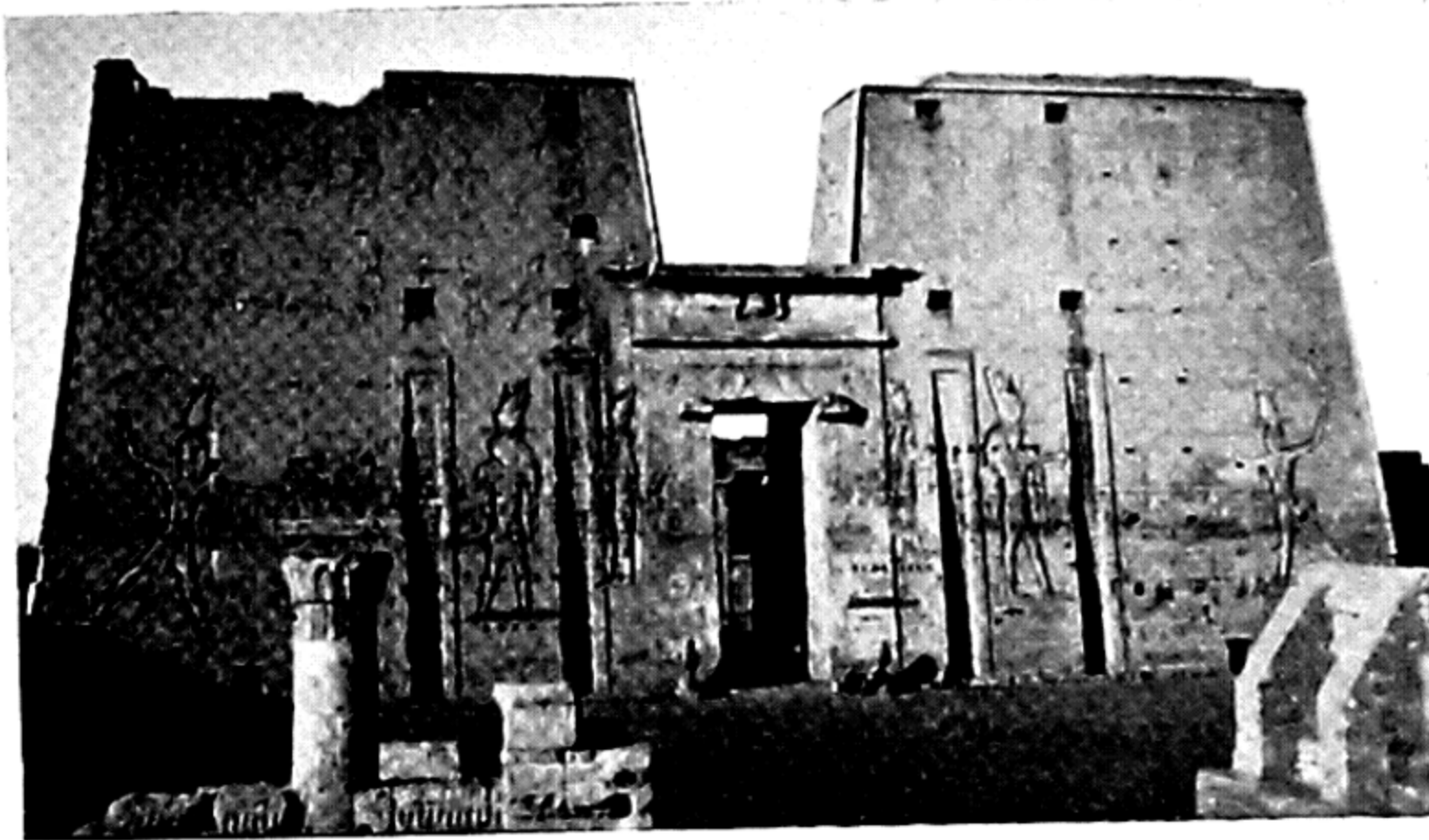
they continued for another thousand years, during which time the Egyptian artists, once again under the control of the priests, ceased to give anything new to Egyptian art. When artists are prevented from using their imaginations the art of a country will soon die.

There have been many wonderful and beautiful things recovered from beneath the sands of Egypt, but of these all the temples and the tombs are the most interesting.



18. AN EGYPTIAN TEMPLE

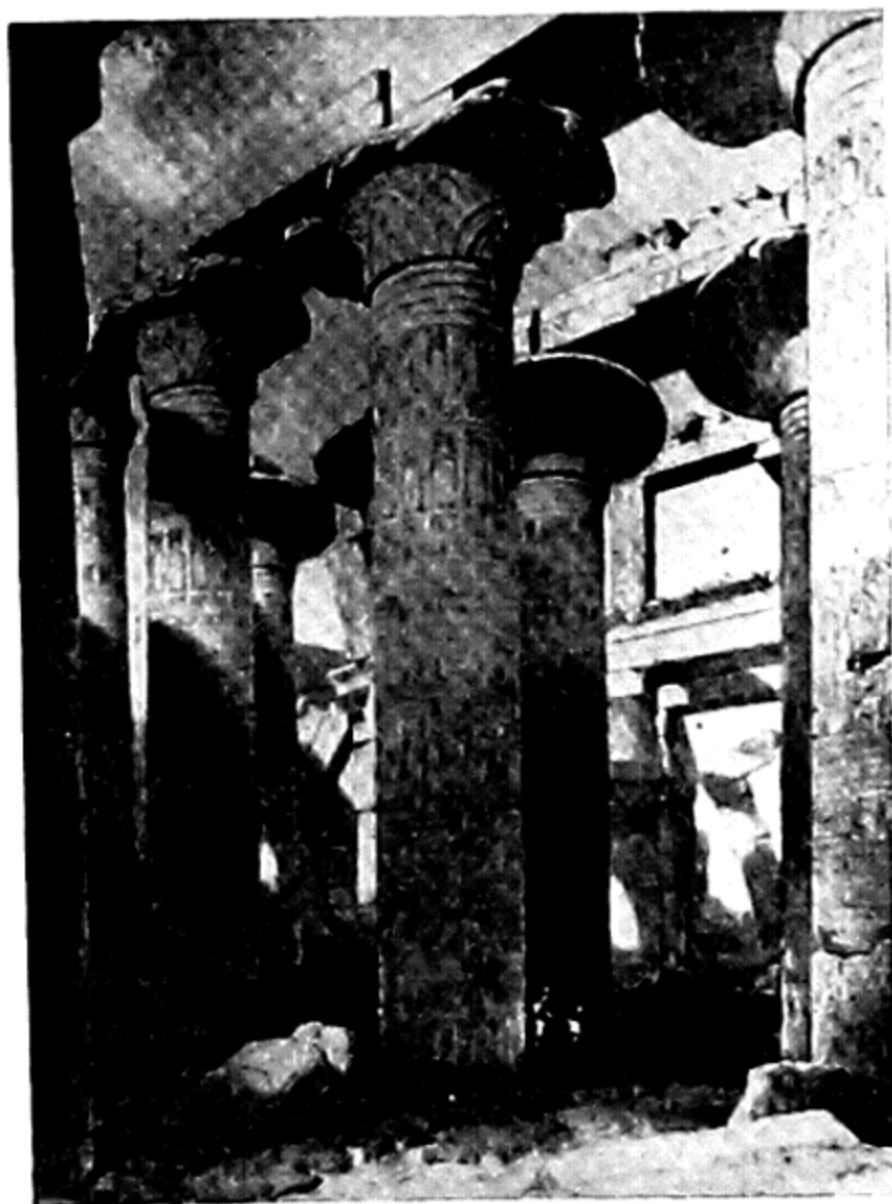
Most of the temples, many of them carved and hewn from the solid rock or built of huge stones, are not as old as the pyramids, but they have stood heavy and box-like in appearance, their doorways guarded by huge figures of gods and men, for thousands of years. The



19. SCULPTURED PYLONS

architecture of ancient Egypt is one mainly of tombs and temples, and those that still stand give an impression of great power and strength, as if they had not been built by the hands of men, but had grown out of the earth.

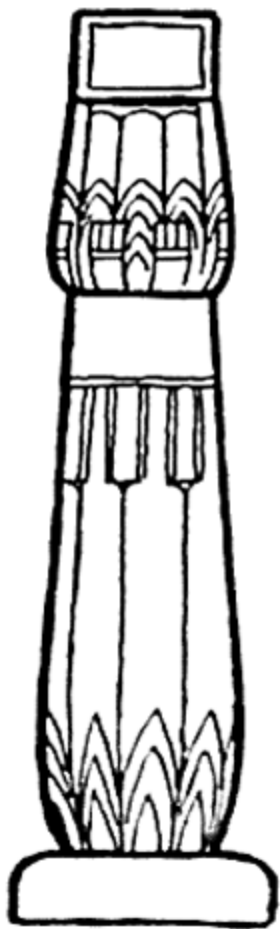
The majority of them were built of granite, and as this is a very hard material to cut and carve, the buildings were very simple in design, with very little ornamentation on the outside, but a great deal inside. The only decorations outside were the coloured sculptures that covered the huge entrance gateways, called *pylons*, which were square towers with sides that sloped inward, so that they were smaller at the top than at the bottom. The walls were very thick and the doorways deep, giving welcome shade from the hot sun.



20. THE MASSIVE PILLARS OF THE HALL OF THE TEMPLE OF AMMON, KARNAK

For many centuries to come one of the greatest difficulties

facing a builder was roofing a large space. With our iron and steel girders this is a simple matter for us, but for the builders of ancient times the problem was always a hard one. From wall



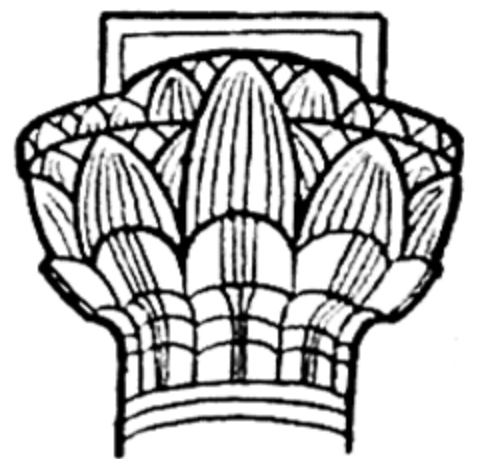
21. COLUMN
WITH CLOSED
LOTUS-FLOWER
CAPITAL

to wall were laid slabs of stone, but, of course, these would not stay up of their own accord, so the interior became quite crowded with pillars which held the roof up. The *Temple of Ammon* at Karnak has a hall measuring 340 feet by 170 feet with 134 beautifully decorated columns, those of the two central rows being 69 feet high and over 12 feet thick. A hundred men could stand on each of the huge round *capitals*. This hall is considered to be one of man's greatest architectural triumphs.

All doorways and windows of Egyptian temples are straight at the top, a huge beam, called a lintel, spanning the width and holding up the masonry above it. You will not see any domes or round arches in any of these buildings, and the straight lines of the walls and roofs, doors and windows, unbroken by any sudden or gradual curve, give a feeling of restfulness and quiet strength. Inside, once our eyes have become accustomed to the gloom, we would see pictures telling us all about the life of one of the Pharaohs. The temple was, of course, built in honour of a god, but the Pharaoh who built it seemed always to be very fond of letting people know what a fine man he was!

The earliest form of column used by the Egyptians was a thick wooden post standing straight on a block of stone with another slab of stone on the top of the post to support the roof, which was made of a large number of long reeds gathered from the banks of a river. Afterward the columns too were made of these reeds, which were tied top and bottom to keep them together in neat bundles.

Mud was then squeezed between the reeds, and this, when it dried, set hard like cement. Later, when columns were made of stone, they were carved to look like bundles of reeds or lotus-stalks. At the top of these stone columns the capital, which in the early wooden columns was the



22. LOTUS-FLOWER
OPEN

flat stone on top, was carved to represent a lotus-flower, on one column the flower being closed and on another open.

Although he did not make much use of his knowledge, the Egyptian builder knew all about arches and vaulting, because vaulted tombs dating back to 2800 B.C. have been found. He preferred flat roofs and flat tops for his doorways and windows. If the roof of an Egyptian temple was removed, and we saw only the thick pillars and the flat stones spanning the gaps between them, we should be reminded of Stonehenge, built by Druids, for whom, as for the Egyptians, these flat stones had some religious meaning.

The Egyptians thought that the earth and the sky were flat, the latter being held up by tremendous pillars at the edges of the earth, and the temple was built and decorated with these beliefs in mind. The paved floor, which represented the earth, was often decorated with paintings of flowers and leaves. The four corners of the building acted as the four columns holding up the sky, and the ceiling, which, of course, represented the heavens, was sometimes painted blue, with a golden sun, moon, and stars on it.

3. *The Arts of the Ancient Greeks*

I EXPECT some of you have heard the saying, "The Glory that was Greece," and wondered what that glory was. It was a glory gained not entirely by conquering other nations in war and building up a huge empire. It was something far more splendid, far more lasting. It was a glory created by men who used their hands, their minds, and their hearts in the making of beautiful things and the erecting of beautiful buildings. That glory still lingers and still holds a spell over us.

The arts of the ancient Greeks began in Crete, an island off the south coast of Greece, where they made wonderful pottery—urns, bowls, cups, and vases—much of which may be seen in some of our museums. The making of pottery is the oldest of the arts, and even prehistoric man knew a little about it. The moulding or shaping of these jars and bowls naturally led to the modelling of figures, which was the beginning of sculpture, while the designs painted on them opened the way to painting pictures on panels of wood and on walls.



23. SOME GRECIAN VASES

Vases then were not used as we use them to-day, to hold flowers. They were much larger and of many different shapes, and were used for storing oil or wine. The designs painted on the earliest Greek pottery, from about 1100 to 800 B.C., were copied from patterns on woven fabrics, and because these patterns look very much like geometric designs this style of decoration is called *Geometric*.

From the Egyptians, with whom they traded, the Greeks learned much about painting and architecture, and we can see in the designs painted on their pottery how closely they studied

the work of the Egyptians, especially in the figures, which are drawn very simply in outline profile.

Like the wall-pictures of the Egyptian tombs, these vase-paintings tell us a great deal about the sports and pastimes of the Greeks, and give us pleasant little glimpses into their private lives. The orange, red, and black figures dance, run, leap, throw javelins, hunt, fight, play chess, put on armour, feast, play the harp or lute, following each other in a gay and lively procession around the sides of bowls, jars, and vases. They are practically the only examples of early Greek painting that have survived the ages, for the artists did not then paint on wood panels or canvas, but on the walls of houses and temples, most of which have long since disappeared or are in ruins.



24. POTTERY WITH GEOMETRIC DESIGNS

The architecture of ancient Greece has had a great effect on the many different styles that have come after it, and the Romans and early Christians owed much to it. The Greek builder, like the Egyptian, knew all about arches and towers and domes, but he did not make much use of his knowledge, possibly because he realized that they would not fit in very well with his particular style of building.

Most of the ruins we see in Greece, and in other places where the Greeks settled, are of temples, tombs, and theatres. Unlike the Egyptian temples, which were often quite plain on the



25. VASE-PAINTING SHOWING A BOY IN SCHOOL

outside, certain parts of the walls of Greek temples were decorated with images of their gods and carvings of religious processions. The grounds of the temples, too, were plentifully studded with statues of gods, athletes, and heroes. The Greek loved gaiety and colour, and his temples were much brighter than those of the Egyptians, who

seemed to prefer dark, gloomy rooms filled with awe and mystery.

We have read how simple were the designs painted on early Greek pottery. Simple, too, were their earliest buildings. In the south of Greece, which was widely famed for its austere way of life, there lived a group of people known as the Dorians (the Spartans were the most famous of them). Their name has been given to a particular type of column which they invented: the *Doric* column. It is a fluted column, swelling slightly in the middle and narrowing towards the top, and it has a capital of plain, uncarved stone. *Flutings* are the grooves or channels cut from top to bottom of the columns.

The houses of these people were made of wood, and were perfectly plain and undecorated. At first they were merely round huts of twigs covered with mud, and had a pointed roof. Presently the hut was made square, and later it became oblong. About 600 B.C. the first stone and brick buildings were erected with gabled roofs. When, eventually, the house became the home of a god (a temple) the door, which up to this time had been quite small, was made much larger and wider, and a row of columns was placed in front of it to make it more impressive and noble. Soon the number of pillars increased, and they were placed at the back as well as the front of the building, and finally a gallery of pillars was put all round it, and the gables were filled with statues of gods and heroes. The walls were bright with coloured decorations in red, blue, green, and yellow and with quite a lot of gilding, and the floor was made of beautifully patterned *mosaics*—little pieces of marble of different colours so arranged as to form a design or picture. We shall be reading more about mosaics in a later chapter.

I mentioned a little while ago that the Doric column swelled slightly in the middle. Why? Well, if you look at a column that is the same width all the way up it will seem to be narrower in the middle. The wise Greek builder realized this, and in order to make it look right he added to the width of it just where your eyes once told you it looked thinner. The Greeks were a very thorough people, and they strived for perfection in every part of their buildings.

While the Egyptian artists were tied by certain rules and had no opportunity to try different styles and methods of painting and carving, the Greek artists used their eyes and their imagina-

tions. They searched for, and tried out, new ideas. Their earliest statues were of wood, and their very first works in marble, carved in the seventh century B.C., look very much like wooden figures. There is nothing soft or flowing in the folds of the draperies, and there does not seem to be a body beneath them. The figures are stiff and have no life or movement, and they certainly give no indication of the lovely works that were to come later on and make Greek sculpture so famous and so much admired to-day.

So we see that Greek sculpture was not always realistic or even beautiful. It was a long time before it reached the heights of perfection. The seventh and sixth centuries B.C. were years of trial and error, during which the artists learned to correct faults and avoid mistakes. They were years of hard work, but at the end of them the stiff, wooden-looking figures had gone, because the sculptor had learned to give movement to his statues, to make the head look as if it was turning, or the spine moving with the swing of the body. In short, he had discovered how to make them look natural, lifelike, and very beautiful.

Some time after 480 B.C., when the Persians had sacked and destroyed the Acropolis, which was the stronghold of the ancient kings of Athens, Pericles, the chief of the men then ruling Athens, ordered new temples to be built on the Sacred Hill. He wanted Athens to be the most beautiful city in the world, and her new temples, built of the finest glistening white marble, to be the most magnificent in all Greece.

Phidias, the greatest artist of that time, was asked to carve the statues of the gods and goddesses that were to be housed in these wonderful buildings. Unfortunately, none of the works of this great master exist to-day, and we know of the beauty of them and the skill of the artist only from copies that have survived the centuries and from what the writers of the time had to say about them.

The most important temple of them all was that erected to Athena, the goddess of wisdom, after whom Athens was named. She was regarded by most of the Greek cities as their patron saint, guide, and counsellor, and among her many duties was that of protecting each from its enemies. Phidias carved her statue, the loveliest of all on the Sacred Hill, between 447 and 432 B.C.

Sheets of gold were used for the armour and garments of the

warrior-goddess and ivory for the flesh. Her eyes were of precious stones. The statue stood at least thirty feet high, and to us would have seemed a very gaudy affair. To us 'gaudy' means something bright, 'showy,' and rather cheap, but to the Greek such a display of brilliant colour, jewels, and glittering gold was merely a way of showing his love of gaiety and richness. It must have been a very inspiring sight to the people when they first beheld their goddess standing proudly in her new temple, with the sunbeams peering through the roof, making the ivory shine and the gold and jewels glisten.

Phidias also carved a statue of Zeus, the father of all the gods, and it was regarded by the writers of his time as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. This, too, was made of ivory and gold. The bearded god sat on a jewel-studded throne of ebony, gold, and ivory. Gold were his sandals and garments, and in his hand he held a sceptre adorned with rich metals. Pausanias, a Greek traveller who lived and wrote in the second century A.D., gives us all this information, and he tells us that when the statue was placed in its new home Phidias prayed to Zeus to give him a sign if he was pleased with his work. "Immediately," says Pausanias, "a thunderbolt struck that part of the floor where, even to my time, stood a bronze pitcher." The thunderbolt was the symbol of Zeus, who usually carried a few about with him and was not always very careful where he hurled them. Apparently he liked the work of Phidias very much.

The statues are no more, and of the temples wherein they stood only the foundations or ruins remain. Of all the many



26. THE PARTHENON

temples that dotted the land of Greece, the most famous was the *Parthenon*, the most perfectly proportioned building ever constructed, and much of it is still to be seen. Even its sad ruins, standing in lonely grandeur above modern Athens, are beautiful and noble, and we can only regret the unkindness of man and Nature in their treatment of what was once the most beautiful building in the world.

This perfect Doric temple was begun in 450 B.C. It was an oblong building of the purest white marble with a fine high *colonnade* (a row of columns) on each side of it. The sloping roof of timber had thin slabs of transparent marble inserted in it to let in the daylight. Above the capitals of the columns legendary scenes were carved. These were painted in rich colours, and the roof also was brightly coloured. There was a great deal of sculpture, most of it being very high up on the walls, so that a really close view of it was not possible to people standing below. Yet this did not in any way make the sculptor take less care with it, or forget even the smallest details of the figures. In some of them he has shown muscles which cannot be seen in the human body, but only felt beneath the skin.

Very little of this sculpture remains in its original position, for much of it, including a great deal of the magnificent *frieze* that ran round the walls, was brought to England at the beginning of the nineteenth century by Lord Elgin, and these figures, now known as the Elgin Marbles, are in the British Museum.

This frieze was a long picture of a procession in honour of Athena. There are armoured knights mounted on impatient, prancing horses. Other knights are preparing to mount, and one youth stoops to fasten his sandal, meanwhile keeping a sharp eye on the procession as it moves off, wondering if he will be able to get into his right place. Chariots creak along, and in front of them walk staid old gentlemen, the elders



27. HORSEMEN (FROM THE NORTH FRIEZE OF THE PARTHENON)

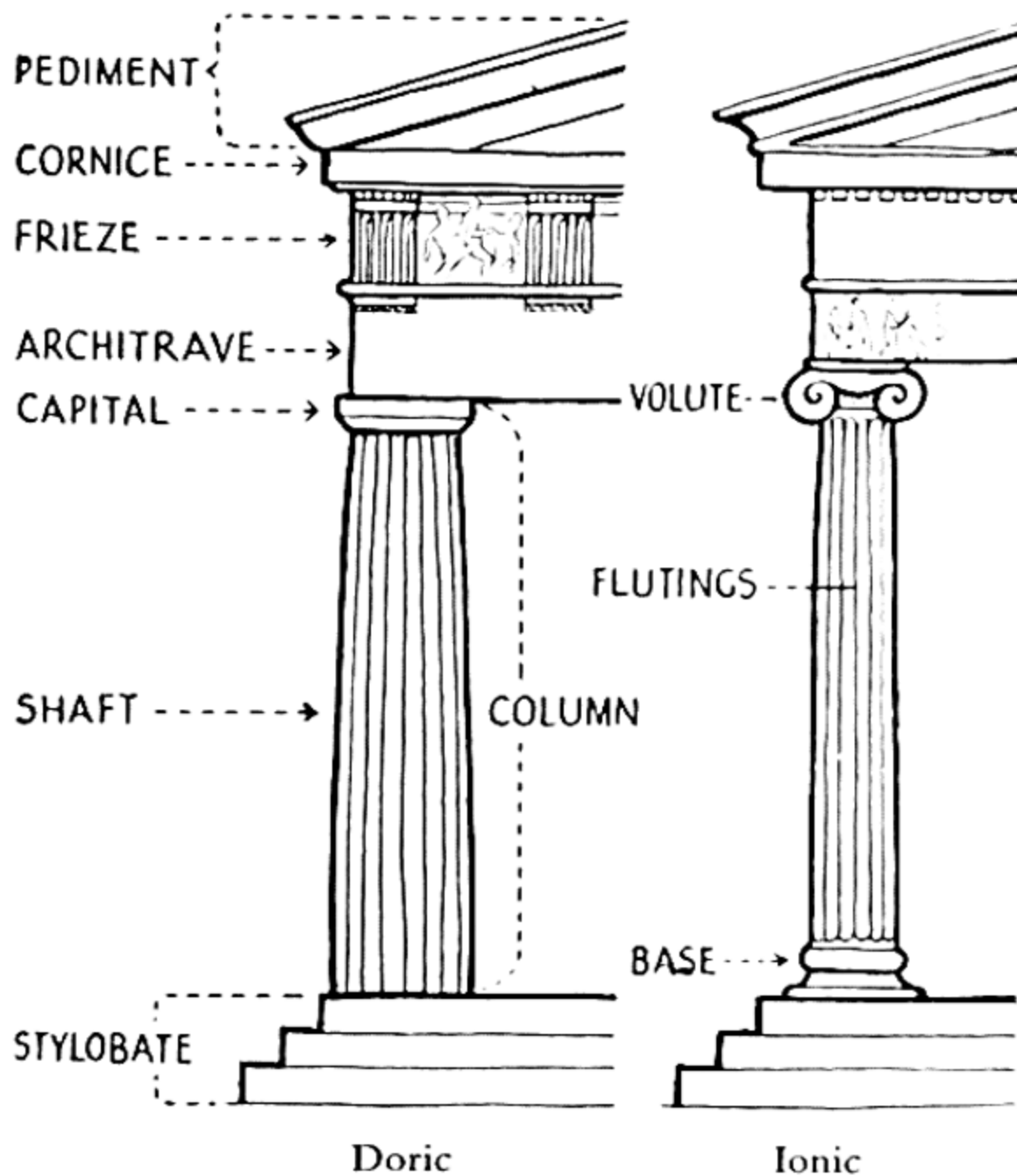
British Museum.

of the city, each carrying a sprig of olive. A band of musicians leads the way, preceded by maidens carrying gifts to the goddess, for it is her birthday. Then we come upon the sad-eyed oxen and sheep, innocent victims of the sacrifice shortly to take place. Young and old, men and women, gallant youths, gods and goddesses, you see them all here, the people and deities of Greece in the days of her glory. The cloaks and garments of the people flutter in the wind, but the garments of the gods remain perfectly still and undisturbed. There they sit in celestial majesty, serene and calm and completely unaffected by all the noise and bustle of these mortals.

The Greek builder made good use of decoration, but he knew that too much of it would have spoiled the simple beauty of his buildings. The Greek temple was a masterpiece of design, with everything in its right place, and each place planned and decided before the actual work of construction was started. All who were employed on it—carpenter, mason, carver, painter—knew the part his work was to play, and, whether it was large or small, seen or unseen, he knew it would be perfectly in keeping with the rest of the building.

I expect that by this time you have found out what a *capital* is, so I think it would be wise, before we go any further, to talk a little more about columns, because columns played a very important part in the building of temples. We know about the *Doric*, the simplest and most sturdy form of column, short and squat, plain and undecorated. Another is the *Ionic*, a less strong and more slender and delicate pillar, with an oblong capital ending in a curl, called a *volute*, which looks like a ram's horn. There is a third style of column, the *Corinthian*, which will be described later on. These names are known as 'orders' of architecture. To avoid a lot of difficult words and explanations which could be very confusing, I have drawn diagrams of these orders, and I think you will find them easier to understand than a whole book of words about them.

To-day we should not think of putting statues of boxers, footballers, and cricketers in the grounds of a church, no matter how much we admired them. But the Greeks thought quite differently about their athletes and sportsmen. They put statues of them around their temples because they had won fame and glory for the honour of the gods. In Greece art and athletics



28. GREEK ORDERS OF ARCHITECTURE

were very closely connected. A fine, well-built body was a gift from the gods, and every Greek youth tried to make his body as perfect as possible. And the sculptor loved to portray a muscular body, for among the works that have survived, many are of wrestlers, javelin-throwers, and other athletes. Many of the statues have long since vanished, and only the pedestals on which they once stood have been found. It is believed that, being made of bronze, the statues were melted down in the Middle Ages, when that metal had become scarce. But from the old writers we learn that the figures had eyes of coloured stones and gilded hair and lips. Fortunately, copies were made of some of these statues, and such a work as *The Discus-thrower*, by Myron, who lived during the fifth century B.C., was copied in marble, and this copy gives us some idea of the magnificence of the original.

From this we see how much the artists had progressed since the days when statues were carved from wood. Myron has given life and force to his figure. You can imagine that at any moment the arm will swing forward and the disc go hurling through the

air. There is a tenseness in the body, the toes grip the ground, and the thrower is poised for immediate action.

The figures are now quite lifelike and have an unearthly beauty. The statues of the gods are really nothing more than statues of human beings, except that they are more perfect in



29. MYRON : *The Discus-thrower*
Vatican.

face and form than any human being that ever lived. The Greek artist had no fanciful ideas of giving his gods animal heads. A god was just a glorified mortal, very much like himself, with similar virtues and weaknesses, and not a being to be dreaded and feared, as were the gods of the Egyptians.

Look at *The Discus-thrower* again. You see there is strength, movement, and tension in the body. But do you notice that something very important is missing? There is no look of grim determination which you would expect to see in the face of a man who is putting every ounce of his energy into his

sport. No set jaw, no pressed lips. He looks so calm and uninterested in his effort that he could just as well be reading a book.

This lack of expression is to be seen in many faces of Greek statues. That does not mean that any face carved by a Greek sculptor could ever be called dull or lifeless, but they do not often show any feeling or emotion. You could not say, "That woman must have been feeling very sad," or "That man was enjoying a joke." To have curved the lips in a smile or wrinkled the brow with a frown would have destroyed the calmness and dignity of the features.

No matter how exciting the episode he might be illustrating, the artist seldom allowed his figures to show any violent movement. In the picture of *Orpheus and Eurydice* you will see how the artist has told his story with feeling and drama and yet avoided all the most obvious movements of the figures.

Orpheus was a great musician who, by playing on his lute, could make the flowers open and the most savage beast gentle. When his wife Eurydice died he went to the lower regions to bring her back to earth. He found the gates of Hades guarded by a fierce dog, Cerberus, but he soothed this beast by playing a tune on his lute. Orpheus wandered on, looking for his wife, and at length he came to where Pluto, the ruler of these regions, sat on his throne. To him he told his story, and begged that his wife be returned to him. Pluto agreed on condition that as he led his wife away Orpheus must not look at her face. This seemed easy to Orpheus, who gladly accepted this condition. So he took his wife away towards the upper regions, being very careful not to look at her. But as he led her slowly towards freedom he began to wonder whether Eurydice had changed very much since he had last seen her, when she was dying. Forgetting his agreement with Pluto, he turned to look at her—and lost her for ever.



30. *Orpheus and Eurydice*
National Museum, Naples.

In the picture Hermes, the god who guided the dead souls to Hades, claims Eurydice once more, gently but firmly touching her wrist. There is no harshness in his eyes, but just a sadness at the misfortune of these two unhappy mortals. Eurydice is resigned to her fate, and looks sorrowfully at her husband as he pulls aside her veil and gazes into her face once more before he utters his final farewell.

So many artists would have given us a terrifying picture of faces filled with agony and grief. Hermes could have been pictured triumphantly seizing Eurydice and carrying her, struggling, away from her despairing husband. But the artist has chosen to tell the story with figures which, with their bowed heads, unruffled garments, and almost complete absence of movement, convey to us all the tragedy of the story. They



31. *Laocoön*
Vatican.

more like the faces of ordinary human beings and less godlike in beauty. A likeness to the model, once considered as being not very important when only sheer beauty was desired, now became the only thing that mattered. The bust-portrait of *Alexander the Great*, carved by Lysippus in the fourth century B.C., shows quite clearly the change that was coming about.

The founding of his great empire by Alexander was to have an enormous and, in a way, a disastrous effect on Greek art.

All the capitals of the empire made heavy demands on the Greek artists, who, seeing a ready and profitable market, sought to please their foreign clients by mingling their own style with that of the conquered countries. There are few remains to give us any idea of the

are what we call 'idealized' figures—that is, figures which the artist has made as perfect as possible in proportion and appearance, as no living creature could be. There is a dignity in them which could never have been depicted if the faces had been distorted by grief or anger, for an angry man rarely looks dignified. It is not until we come to the first century B.C. that we see, as in the *Laocoön*, a display of agony and really violent movement.

Towards the end of the fourth century B.C. the faces of statues were becoming



32. LYSIPPUS : *Alexander the Great*
Istanbul.

magnificence and splendour of the great buildings they designed and erected, with their wealth of ornament and the new style of column, the *Corinthian*. This style, named after the city of Corinth, is considered as much Roman as Greek in design, and is recognized by its more elaborate Ionic capital. These unending demands and the eagerness to fulfil them caused Greek artists to become careless, and from that time the quality of their work grew poorer and poorer.

For many years the only subject of the Greek painters had been the human figure, and they never bothered very much about landscapes. But when the Greek poet Theocritus, who lived in the third century B.C., wrote his poems about the simple lives and pleasures of the country people, artists thought that such themes would make excellent subjects for pictures. Thereafter many a wealthy citizen had the walls of his villa covered with pictures of trees, animals, fountains, landscapes and gardens, and shepherd-boys carrying sheep on their shoulders. These wall-paintings show quite clearly that the artists were strongly influenced by sculpture, for in many of them the figures look as if carved from marble or stone.

The arts of Crete and the Ægean lasted about 1500 years, during which time the Greeks became the most brilliantly artistic people of all time. Their work has always been a source of inspiration to artists of every race and age.

The Greek empire collapsed with the death of Alexander in 323 B.C., and with its passing the wide-flung colonies became an easy prey to a new mistress, who sought and finally gained the rule of the whole world—Rome.



33. ROMAN
CORINTHIAN
CAPITAL

4. *The Arts of Rome*

DURING their battles in Greece the Romans saw the wonderful temples, theatres, colonnades, and statues that made every Greek city a beautiful place, and they realized how mean and poor were the little temples they had built in Rome. From that time the Romans became very Greek-minded, and they were soon building temples in the Greek style, while wealthy Roman merchants began collecting Greek statues and pictures.

In Spain, France, and Italy, and even in our own country,



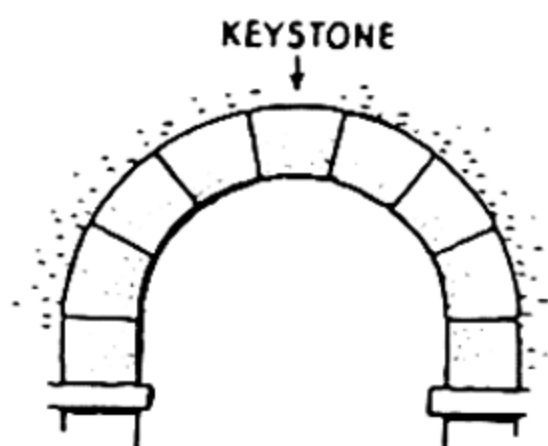
34. THE COLOSSEUM

we see evidence of the skill of the Romans in engineering, road-making, and architecture, but it was in his own city-state that the Roman achieved some of his greatest architectural triumphs.

The Romans did not often invent anything artistic, but they were not slow to copy the arts and crafts of the countries they conquered, and in the *Colosseum* they made use of each 'order' of architecture created by the Greeks. On the ground floor is a form of Doric, on the second Ionic, and on the third and fourth Corinthian half-columns. This mixture of three different styles is not the muddle one would imagine it to be. It is a perfect blending, and it had a great effect upon the work of later architects. The building is oval in shape, and the walls consist of a series of arches placed one above the other. They were once topped by a ring of masts from which a huge awning was spread to give shade to the audience when the arena was in use.

The Romans loved using arches in their buildings, because they found it a much more useful and safer way of connecting columns than a flat stone, which the Greeks and Egyptians always used. The stones of a round arch are wedge-shaped,

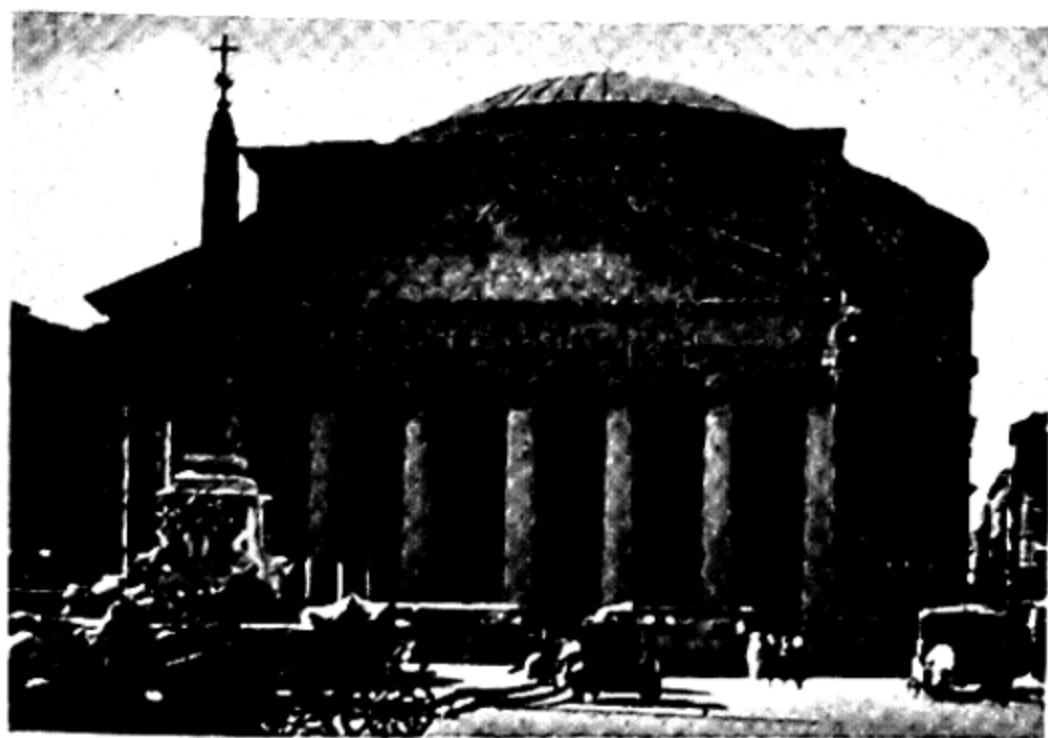
and at the top of the arch is what is called a *keystone*. A tremendous weight can be put on a round arch without its giving way, because the greater the weight the more the wedge-shaped stones press against one another, and the arch becomes more rigid and firmer. A flat stone is liable to snap under a heavy burden, and that is why Greek buildings were seldom more than a single storey in height.



35. ARCH WITH KEYSTONE

Arches led to the invention of *vaulting*, and the Romans became expert in this art. Vaulting is a roof arched either singly like a tunnel, or doubly by placing one tunnel across another and cutting away the corners. The vaulted roof of Westminster Abbey is a good example of these tunnels crossing one another.

Rome, like Greece, had many gods, and she built temples for them. The most famous of these, the *Pantheon*, which to-day is a church, was begun by the Emperor Hadrian in A.D. 117, and it was dedicated to the gods of the seven planets—Apollo, Jupiter, Diana, Saturn, Venus, Mars, and Mercury.



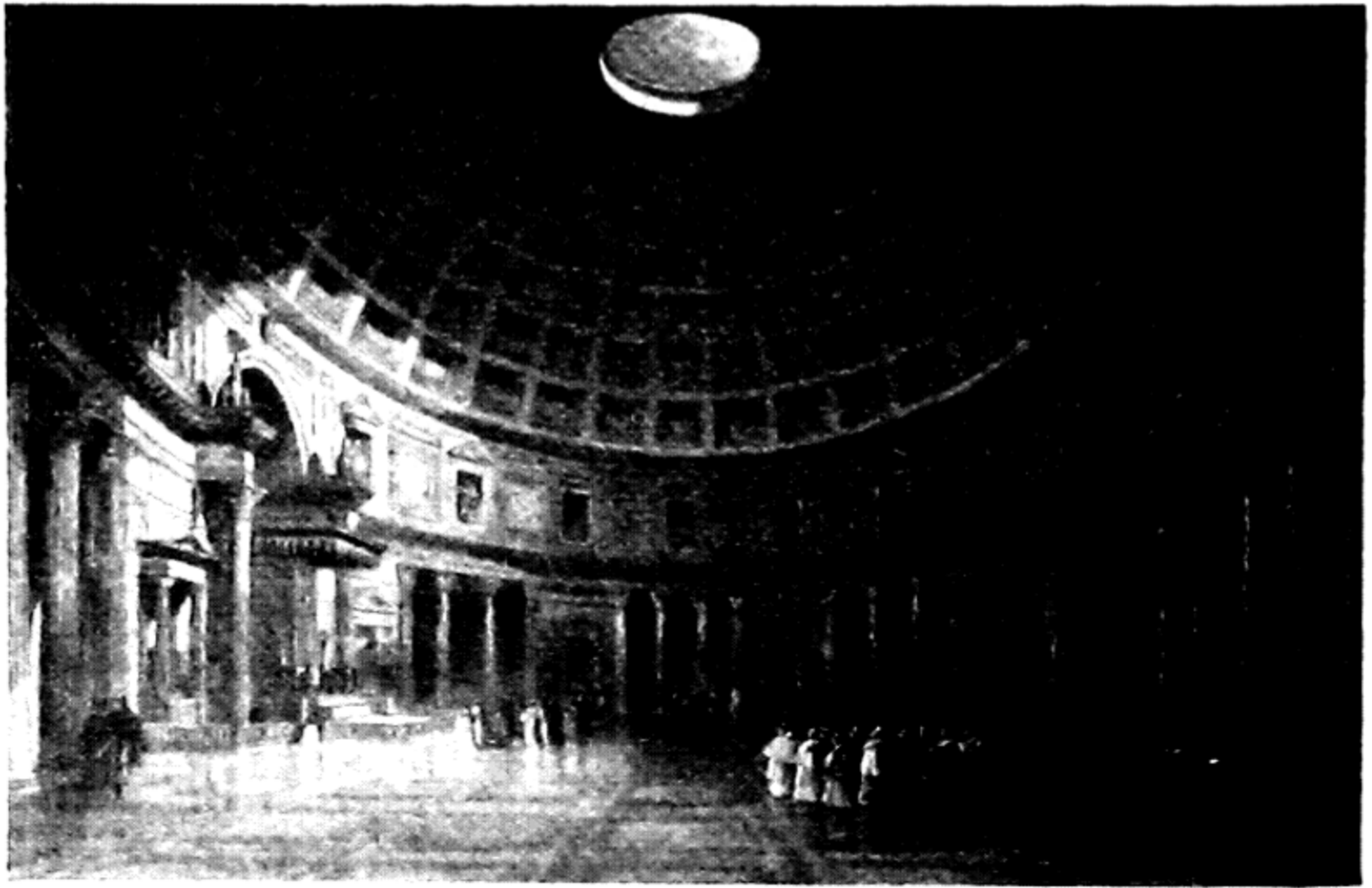
36. THE PANTHEON

The most beautiful part of the outside is the portico of sixteen Corinthian granite columns, the remains of an earlier temple built by Agrippa, the son-in-law of the Emperor Augustus, in 27 B.C. When we pass through this we find ourselves in a huge circular hall 140 feet wide, and above us is a domed roof, one of the finest examples of Roman vaulting. In the centre of the dome is a round opening thirty feet wide which provides the only light and ventilation of this vast building.

It is the outside of the Pantheon, however, which tells us a great deal about Roman methods of building and the delight they took in making things appear to be what they were not.

The great wall of brick is really only a shell five inches thick, and by itself would not be strong enough to support the heavy dome. Unseen behind it lies the real support, a concrete wall twenty feet thick. The brick shell was originally covered with marble.

Now, no Greek would have dreamed of telling such a huge



37. INTERIOR OF THE PANTHEON

From an engraving by F. Smith, 1839.

lie. His marble buildings were marble throughout. If he had built with brick he would have shuddered at the thought of making it look like anything else. And that is why Roman buildings, for all their size, strength, and grandeur, have not the simplicity and quiet dignity of Greek buildings. The Greek had in mind quality; the Roman aimed at quantity—great size and plenty of splendid decoration. The Romans had not the artistic inventiveness of the Greeks, whom they were content to imitate, and their love of grandeur ran away with them at times, so that they began to put in columns and arches and all kinds of decorations that had nothing to do except to look handsome, whereas the Greek used no ornament or column unless it was going to be useful.

Roman architecture reached its peak of magnificence during the times of the Emperors. Augustus, the first Emperor, often boasted that he found Rome brick and left it marble. The

grandest of all the buildings were the baths. These, as well as having public and private swimming-baths, held also a gymnasium, halls for games, libraries, theatres, and lecture-halls, all splendidly decorated with marble, paintings, sculptures, and mosaics. The Baths of Caracalla, begun in A.D. 206, and now in ruins, covered nearly a quarter of a square mile, and had room for sixteen hundred bathers. Their huge domes were covered with mosaics, and the walls were lined with precious Egyptian marble. The pipes and taps were of bronze and silver, and there were statues all over the place.

Rome produced a fourth 'order' of architecture called the *Composite*. As the name suggests, it was a composition, or mixture, of the three existing orders—Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian.

Their Halls of Justice were called basilicas, and these halls provided models for early Christian churches, and many of them were, at a later date, converted to Christian purposes. We shall be learning more about these basilicas in the next chapter.



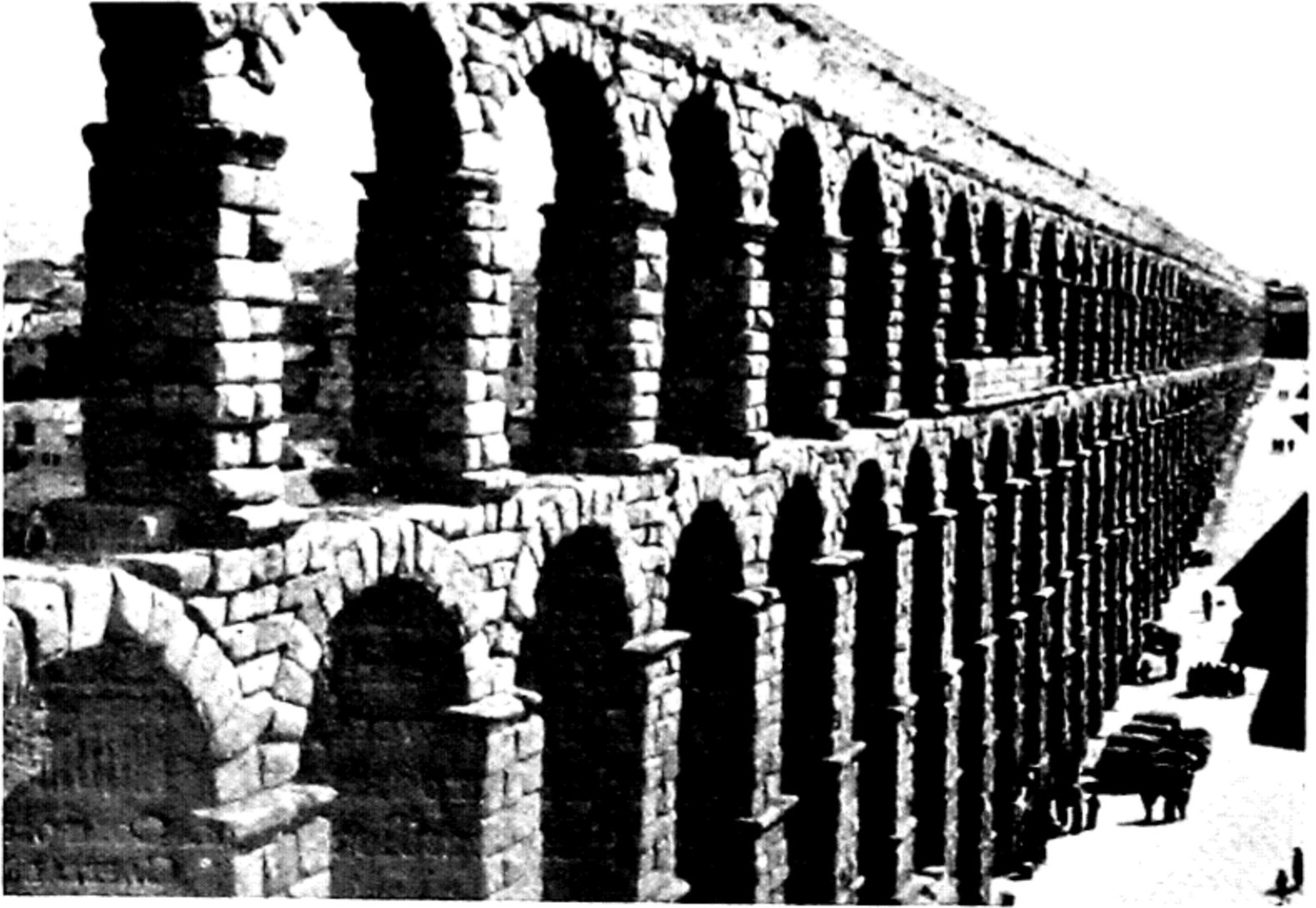
38. COMPOSITE
CAPITAL

The discovery that a good, strong concrete could be made from the volcanic earth around Rome and Naples proved a boon to the builders, for with this new and cheaper material they were able to erect those massive structures of which they were so fond.

They now found that they could increase the width of their buildings and still be able to put a roof over them without using a large number of pillars. So successful did they become in the art of roofing large areas that in the basilica of Constantine they managed to cover a hall 265 feet long and 195 feet wide without using a single column. A new and great achievement!

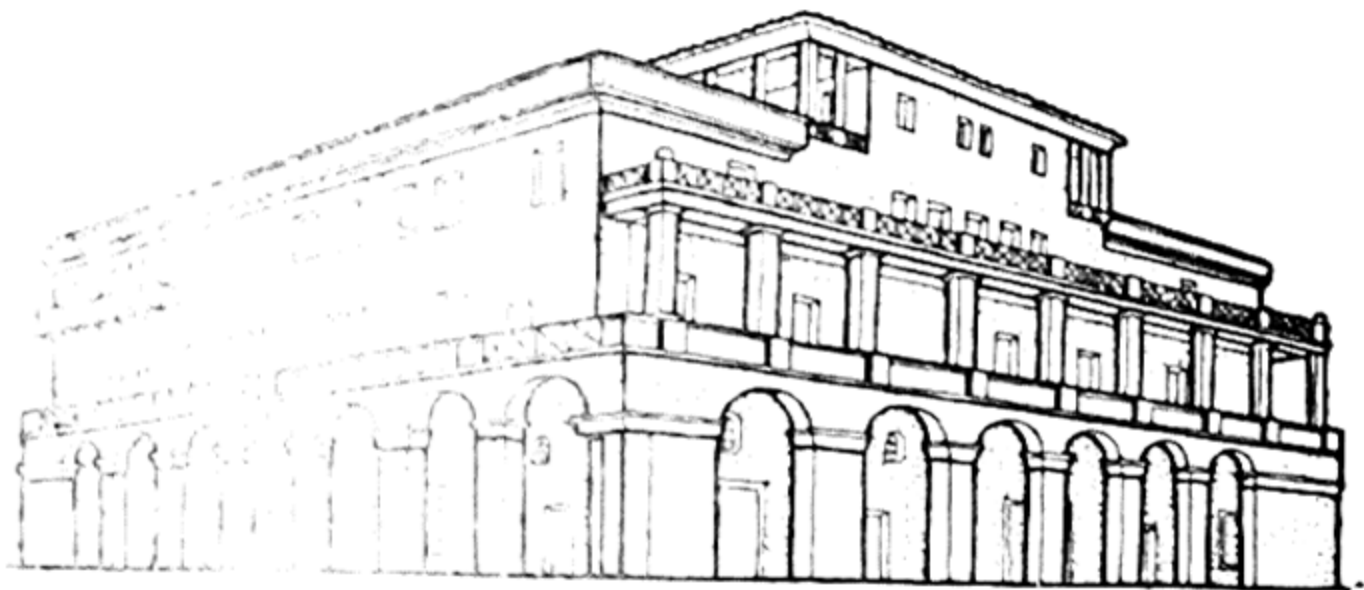
Whatever we may think of his cheating in making brick and concrete buildings seem as if they were entirely of marble, we must admit that the Roman built well. Even to-day many of his bridges and aqueducts are still in use. The Emperor Trajan built an aqueduct in Segovia, in Spain, and it still stands to-day, solid and proud, its one hundred and nine arches striding the town, supplying water to its inhabitants as it did eighteen hundred years ago. This great, grey, granite monster is built in two tiers of arches, and not a bit of cement or mortar was used in it. (See p. 46.)

In the planning and designing of much smaller buildings, too, especially private dwelling-houses, the Romans showed a cleverness that would make many a modern builder rub his



39. AQUEDUCT AT SEGOVIA

eyes with astonishment. In the bigger cities they erected three- and four-storey houses divided into self-contained flats, each floor having its own entrance and staircase. And the tenants



40. ROMAN FLATS AND SHOPS

enjoyed such luxuries as hydraulic lifts (lifts worked by water-power), central heating, and a perfect hot-water system. The central heating was created by pumping hot air round the walls and under the floors of the rooms. On the edges of the cities

wealthy business-men had their beautiful villas with courtyards and verandas. These houses were probably built by Greek workmen, for in them are to be seen, as in the houses of Pompeii, near Naples, many things common to their own country, such as coloured marbles, gilding, and mosaic floors. Greek painters covered the walls with landscapes and scenes from everyday life.

Although Pompeii was buried beneath the ashes of Vesuvius when it erupted in A.D. 79, many of its houses have been cleared of their covering of rock-hard lava, and the wall-paintings in them may still be seen in all their original freshness of colouring.

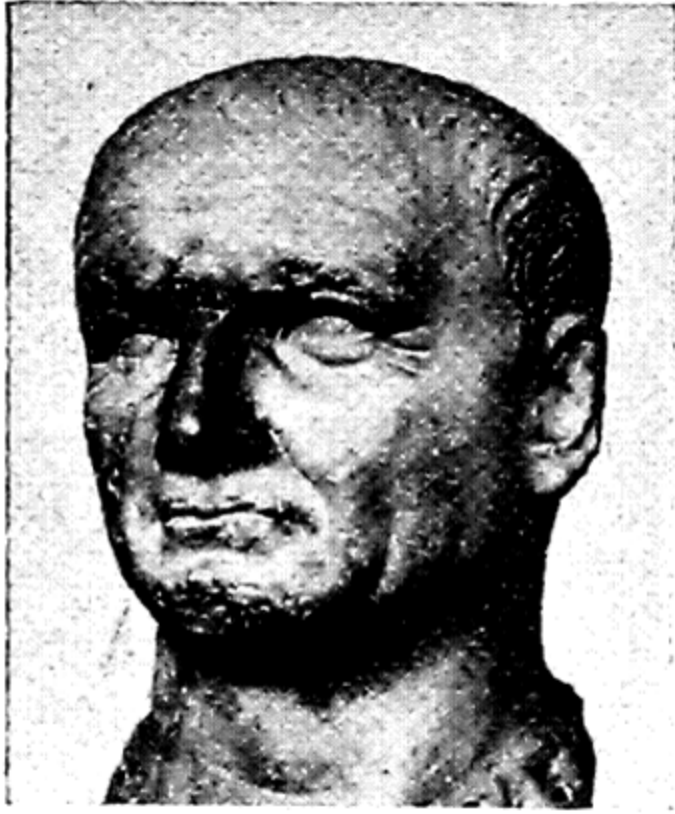
There were, of course, Roman painters as well as Greek, and in their pictures we see a love of warmth and liveliness like that shown in the *Head of a Faun*, a picture painted on the wall of a house in Herculaneum, another city buried under the dust of Vesuvius. He isn't a very handsome little fellow, but his cheeky smile is a distinct contrast in its cheerfulness to the beautiful but rather cold and too-perfect faces of Greek art, where no smile greets us and we are awed by their solemn dignity. The Romans were keenly interested in everything that went on around them, and they cared more for colour and realism and liveliness in their pictures than for perfection of form.

There were many Greek sculptors in Italy at this time, and they made marble copies of famous statues of the early Greek masters. These sculptures are now known as *Græco-Roman*, because the artists, many of whom lived in Rome, carved in the Greek style. We shall be finding more references to Græco-Roman work later on.

We have a number of relics of Roman occupation in this country. Among them are the city walls of Colchester, Richborough, and Porchester. As a result of the bombing of London during the recent war, a great amount of the old Roman wall that once ringed the city has been uncovered near St Paul's



41. *Head of a Faun*
National Museum, Naples.



42. VESPASIANUS
British Museum.

reverence for his gods, and therefore he tried to make it as beautiful as possible. But the Roman sculptor may not have been such a religious man, and his portraits and statues were so true to life that they were not always flattering to his subject. When you bear in mind that the Roman Emperors, like the Egyptian Pharaohs, were looked upon as gods and worshipped as such, you would expect the carvers to produce some beautiful and noble work that would awe the worshipper. But such was not the case. The sculptor made his portraits, whether of nobleman or Emperor, an exact likeness of his subject. The bust of the Emperor *Vespasianus* is a fine work, an excellent portrait of a man who might be a very rich merchant, but he doesn't look much like a god, does he?

Nothing gave the Roman more delight than to let the world know all about his victories on the field of battle. To celebrate them he built magnificent triumphal arches, and adorned them with carvings telling

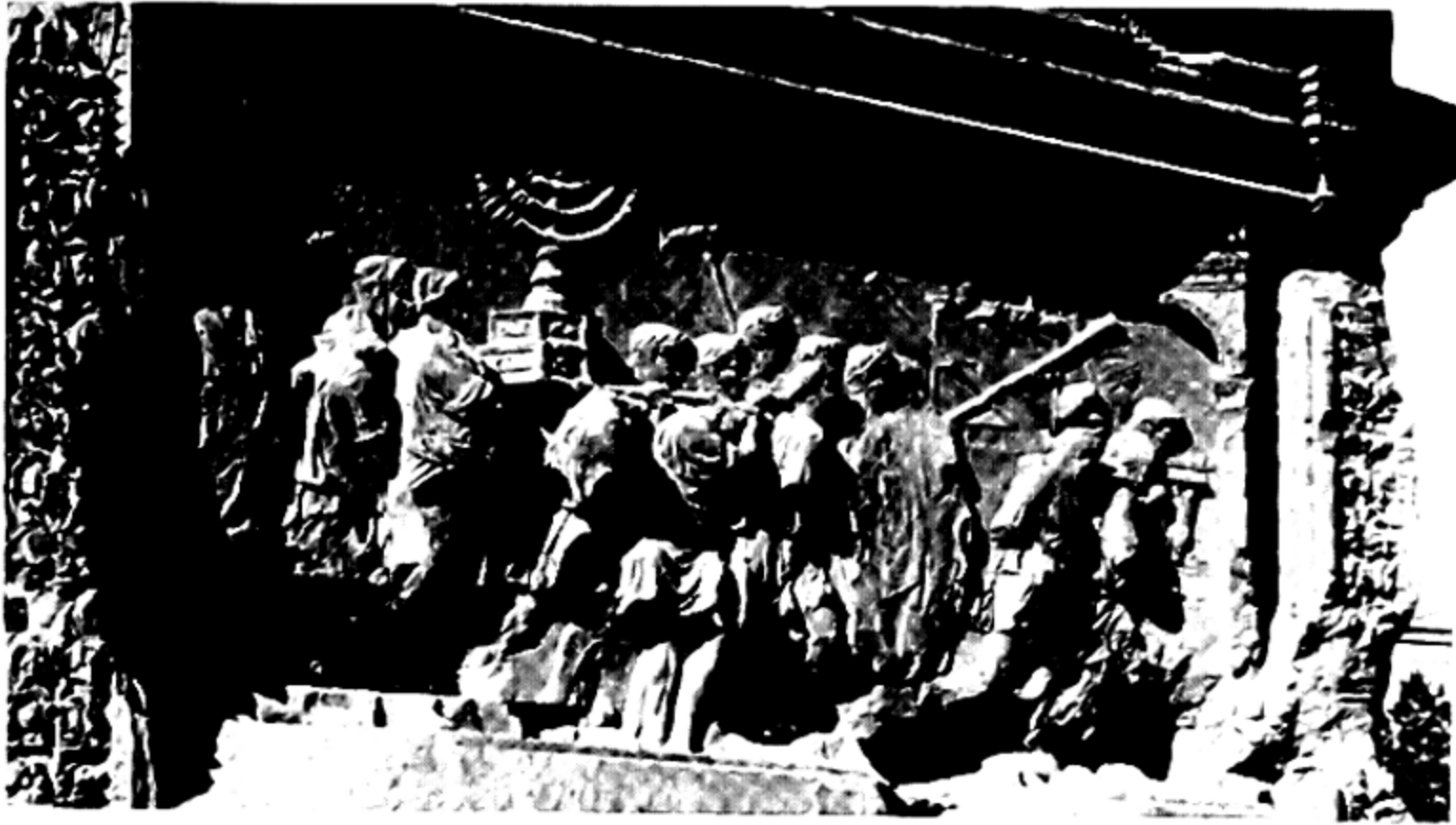
Cathedral. At Bath is the best preserved of all traces of Roman occupation—the bath of *Aquæ Sulis*. On the outskirts of St Albans are the fifteen-hundred-years-old foundations of *Verulamium*, where is to be seen some beautiful mosaic paving, and there are many marble funeral tablets, tiles, statuettes, glass bowls, and bronze helmets in our museums.

In her sculpture, too, Rome borrowed freely from Greece. The Greek artist always regarded his work as a means of showing his



43. THE ARCH OF TITUS

the stories of his many campaigns. The *Arch of Titus* is the most beautiful of those that stand to-day, and its carvings tell of the victory of Titus over the Jews.



44. SCULPTURE FROM THE ARCH OF TITUS

Our picture shows Roman soldiers carrying away the seven-branched candlestick after the sack of Jerusalem. The figures, being carved in high-relief,¹ stand out boldly and give a feeling of perspective, and the different angles of the standards convey a wonderful sense of movement. These carvings are among the finest artistic works of the Romans. The Marble Arch in London, designed in 1828, is modelled on a Roman triumphal arch, but it is a very poor imitation, and has none of the impressiveness of the Roman structure.

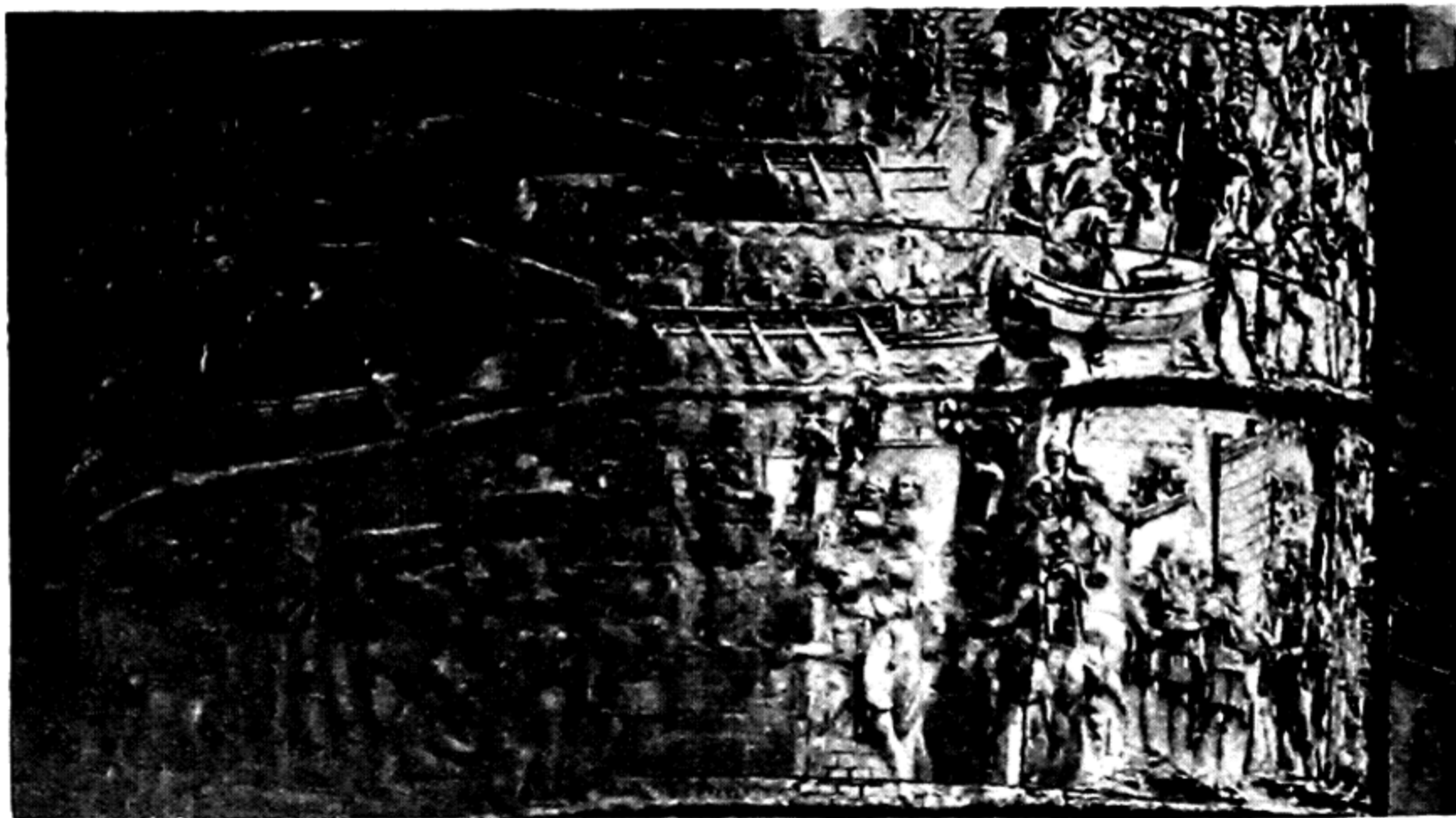
There is a column in Rome called *Trajan's Column*. On this, too, we can read, in a procession six hundred feet long with 25,000 carved figures spiralling up the length of the column, the whole story of the Emperor's wars in Dacia, showing the legions embarking, camping, marching, fighting, and merrymaking. The Romans knew



45. TRAJAN'S COLUMN

¹ See p. 61.

how to present facts such as these in a convincing way, dwelling on little details that make every incident realistic, and they



46. SOME OF THE CARVING ON TRAJAN'S COLUMN

willingly let beauty take second place to realism. It may interest you to know why this method of a continuous strip of pictures was used. Books in those days were not at all like



47. A PICTURE-BOOK

those of to-day. They were long strips of parchment wound on to wood rollers, and as the reader read the script on it, he unwound the scroll. The Trajan column, being a kind of picture-book, is an imitation of one of these scrolls.

But the end of Rome, in spite of all her might and power, was drawing near. In the East there arose a strong force that was one day to drive the Romans from their stronghold, bring about the ruin of their temples and the death of their ancient gods. Christianity had rapidly spread towards the Western world, rousing the peoples of all nations to a new wakefulness, bearing a strange new message of love, peace, and sacrifice.

5. *The Arts of the Early Christians*

WHEN the Emperor Constantine became a Christian in 312 he made Christianity the only religion of his empire, and banned all further worship of the old pagan gods. Up to this time, except when some easygoing Emperor ruled, severe punishments and the threat of death prevented Christians from openly practising their faith. So, in order to worship as their consciences told them to, they had to go 'underground,' and gathered in such places as the Catacombs, which are tunnels deep under Rome, where they could worship secretly and undisturbed.

Now freed from persecution, they began to need new churches. The existing and now unused temples were not suitable, because most of them were too small for Christian services, with their large congregations. The pagans did not have services like we have in our churches. No sermons were preached, and processions and sacrifices took place outside the building. There were not even congregations. The temple was merely a medium-sized house in which stood the statue of the god for whom it was built.

The Roman basilicas were taken over and used as churches because, at the end of the hall, there was a semicircular bay called an *apse*, where once the judge sat, and this was a fine place for the altar. There was also a long and wide central space for the congregation, and this part was called a *nave*, which means ship.

The churches being now provided, there arose a very important question. How were these houses of God to be decorated so that they might be worthy of their purpose? This question seems a very simple one to us, but it caused trouble among the early Christians. All, however, were agreed upon one point—that there should be no statues, because they might cause the newly converted pagans to slip back to idol-worship. The pagans had been told so often that they must forget all about the old gods of their ancestors, for idolatry was a wicked thing and displeasing to Almighty God. And if a new Christian saw a statue of God in the church, would he see any difference between

that and the statue of his favourite pagan god? To him a statue of Jupiter was not just a stone representation of the god. It was Jupiter himself, alive in the image. Therefore a statue of God would, in his eyes, be God, and he would naturally worship the image.

But no one said anything against pictures. Very few people then could read or write, and they learned all about their new religion by listening to sermons, which were simple stories from the Gospels. So the Church decided that pictures would remind people of what they had heard in the sermons, because a picture is more easily remembered than a lot of words, whether written or spoken, and can be easily understood by the most unlearned. Artists were set to work, and the churches became huge picture-books telling the story of Our Lord. A picture of Lazarus being raised from the dead reminded the worshipper that he too would one day rise from the dead. The miracle of the loaves and fishes told him that Our Lord would provide him with food for the body as well as for the soul. And in case he should feel a sudden urge to do a little idol-worshipping in secret, there was a picture of devils tormenting wicked souls, warning him that he would be punished if he refused to obey the laws of his new faith.

The wall-pictures of the Catacombs, which are among the earliest examples of Christian art, were not painted just to decorate the place, but to tell these stories. They were hardly more than simple sketches, for a few quick, rough strokes of the brush were all that were used to indicate a figure. In their pictures the early Christians made no attempt to imitate or copy Nature. For a long, long time there was to be no more of that beauty of line and colour that the Greek artist brought into his work. Art declined slowly, and many of the old and treasured secrets were lost for ever in the wars and invasions that were to come. It was one of those painful times of change, so frequent in history, when new ideas replaced the old.

At first Christian art took the form of symbols or signs. On the rock-walls of the Catacombs and on the coffins lining the walls can be seen carvings of a lamb or a fish, both of which represented Christ. The Church was symbolized by a ship, the Holy Ghost by a dove. The artist showed his cleverness in understanding and illustrating the teachings of the Christian

religion by using symbols which were easy to understand by every one. The dove with a palm-leaf represents the victory of the soul over sin ; a fish with a three-pronged fork tells of the resurrection of Christ after three days in the tomb ; a fish with a basket of bread illustrates the Last Supper.

But in the new churches there were large areas of wall to cover, and soon the symbols became smaller details of larger pictures with figures and animals in them. Most of the artists were, of course, converted pagans who could never quite forget they had been pagans, and in some of the pictures they often introduced little touches of their old beliefs. They drew a few symbols representing the seasons of the year, like those painted in the temples in honour of the gods, and they frequently painted little winged genii, or spirits, flying stiffly through the air. Could these be regarded as early pictures of angels ?

When we were reading about the wall-paintings of the Greek villas a little while ago we learned that among them was one of a shepherd-boy carrying a sheep on his shoulders. How easy it was for these half-pagan artists to paint this picture in a church and call it the Good Shepherd ! Thus paganism, in spite of the efforts of the Church to crush it, still survived, and even entered the sacred buildings of the new religion.

It is not easy to like their peculiar style of painting when we have been used to the grace, beauty, and movement of Greek art. The figures seem so wooden, so unreal, so unlike anything we have seen before. There is nothing solid about them. They might be cut out of coloured paper and stuck on the wall. They are less beautiful than those in an Egyptian tomb, and certainly they have none of the cleverness and life of the cave-dweller's drawings. They have become little more than symbols in a picture that is one larger symbol. The *idea* of the picture is more important than the drawing.

Not all the pictures were painted. Many of them were mosaics. When you study this way of making pictures with little cubes of coloured glass or marble you will understand how difficult it was for the artist to make them realistic. With paints you can mix red with yellow and make orange, or yellow with blue to make green. But no matter how long you mix bits of red marble with bits of yellow marble, you will never get orange marble ! Neither can you get soft colours that gently merge with others, forming lights and shades so that the

figures stand out from the background, giving the picture that third dimension of which we read in Chapter Two.

Here is one of those mosaic pictures called *The Miracle of the Loaves*. How unreal and stiff the figures are, and how coldly they stare at us! Their clothing looks immovable and hard, as if carved from stone. Our Lord occupies the centre of the scene, arms outstretched, and behind Him stand four apostles,



48. *The Miracle of the Loaves*

a. Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna.

holding loaves and fishes. Our Lord is not the bearded man we find in later pictures, but a youth with long hair, as Christians always imagined Him.

The rule made by the Church that over the altar there should be a picture of Christ as a teacher or judge, and along the walls scenes from the Old and New Testaments, or incidents in the lives of the saints, and this rule lasted all through the medieval period.

The Emperor Constantine, seeing the weakness of Rome as the capital of an empire that was fast losing its power, decided to move to Constantinum, the capital of the eastern half of the empire. He renamed it Constantinople, Constantine's city. The art that came from that city is known as Byzantine art.

The Christians of the East also belonged to the Latin Church,

the Church governed by the Pope in Rome, and although they willingly accepted his rule in matters of faith and teaching, many of them refused to follow him in his ideas of art and church decoration. They said that pictures as well as statues should be forbidden, and some of them became quite upset about it, and by their actions earned for themselves the name of 'iconoclasts,' which means image-breakers. In 745 these iconoclasts gained power, and their law soon brought about the disappearance from the churches of any statues and pictures that may have existed.

But there was another party, equally as sincere in their opinions and as determined to uphold them, who said that, while they saw no harm in statues and pictures in church, the Pope's ideas about them were quite wrong. They said that such objects were not meant only to remind worshippers of the saints who had gone to heaven, but were holy objects and were to be regarded as messages or revelations of the supernatural life, sent direct from Heaven.

A hundred years after the iconoclasts had stripped the churches of all statues and pictures this party took power, and ordered them all to be put back again. Once more the artist was busy, but, like his brother in Europe, he was not allowed to do exactly as he liked. He too had to obey the orders of the clergy. Again we find that there is no attempt to make the figures look natural. Drawing was still of less importance than the meaning of the picture.

With all these rules and regulations in his mind—where certain pictures were to be placed; how the figures should be dressed; the colours of the garments; and so on—it is no wonder that the artist became mechanical in his work. After painting so many figures all looking very much the same he could have drawn them with his eyes shut. That is why nearly all Byzantine pictures look alike. There is no invention in them, no inspiration, but there is plenty of colour.

At first simple landscapes were allowed as backgrounds, but they eventually disappeared and were replaced by a mass of gold, making the scene a richly coloured decoration on a dazzling ground, out of which the saints and apostles stare at us with large eyes and rather stupid or stern expressions.

In style and colour these pictures are very much like the miniature pictures painted by the monks of the Middle Ages

in the pages of their missals, which are books containing the prayers of the Mass.

The best examples of early Christian pictorial art may be seen in these 'illuminated' missals. You can see some of these books in many of our cathedrals, and the British Museum has a fine collection. They are worth studying, for they display two arts at once—the art of writing with a quill pen and the art of illumination. Illumination means some form of lighting, and this term may well be applied to these brilliantly coloured



49. PLOUGHING: PART OF A PAGE FROM THE LUTTRELL PSALTER
British Museum.

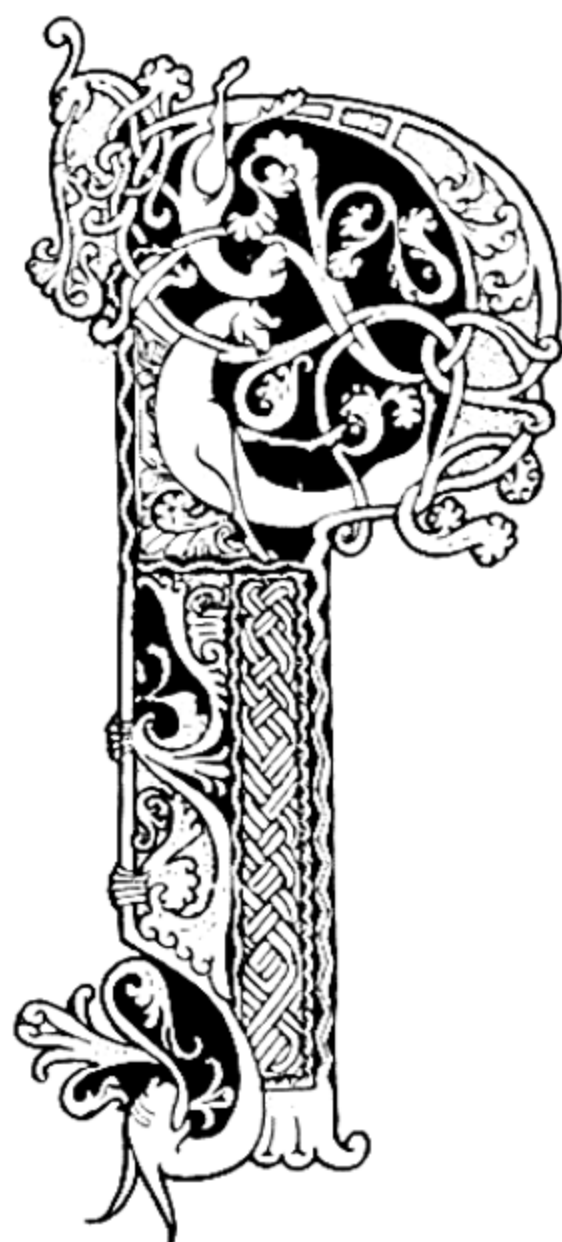
pages, bright with gleaming gold and silver and all the glowing colours of the rainbow. They flame against the dull grey background of the parchment on which they are painted.

Between and around the written words of the Psalms and the Gospels are hunting scenes, queer little animals, flowers and fruit, figures of saints, and labourers at work in the fields. Of course, the faces of the figures are all exactly alike, whether they are emperors, kings, or labourers. We recognize them only by some article of clothing, such as the mitre, the crown, or the short tunic.

They are very carefully but not realistically drawn and coloured, and they peer at us solemnly from a large ornate initial letter, or from a frame of fruit and flowers or birds. Behind them the background may be of gold on which is painted a trellis-work pattern in red or blue, or it may be a mass

of whirls and twirls looking like a ball of string that has become unwound and hopelessly tangled. But when you look into these threaded lines you begin to see that they form a fascinating pattern which the eye follows through all its loops and circles—and comes back to where it started. One wonders how long it took the artist to design and draw such a complicated pattern.

In the peace and quiet of their monasteries, which were the schools of art and of all learning during the Middle Ages, the monks spent their days lovingly drawing and colouring their miniature pictures and writing the sacred words of the Gospels. They gave to God the very best that art and devotion could create. This art, which for a short time even survived the invention of printing, died out altogether when the Reformation came along, closing the monasteries and driving the monks away. The 'reformers' had no need of them or their beautiful books, many of which were deliberately destroyed, and even used for wrapping-paper.



50. DECORATED INITIAL P

For the first two centuries of Christianity little in the way of large sculpture-work was done. Mention has already been made of the carvings on the coffins in the Catacombs, and such carvings were practically the only sculpture of the period. They had nothing to do with the life-story of the dead man. They showed instead the Christian idea of death and the future life, and usually illustrated some prayer from the litany of the dead and dying. As an example, in the litany the dying man calls upon Christ to save his soul from eternal death, and to symbolize this prayer we are shown Daniel, quite unharmed, in a den of lions, or the Hebrews crossing the Red Sea in safety.

The coffins were carved on all four sides and on the lid in high-relief. In the centre of the front panel was sometimes placed a bust-portrait of the dead person, and the rest of the coffin was devoted to Biblical scenes. A fine specimen of such a coffin is that of *Junius Bassus*, a prefect of Rome, which was

carved about 359. Among the incidents illustrated is the sacrifice of Isaac, St Peter's denial of Our Lord, the arrest of



51. CHRIST TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE
From the coffin of Junius Bassus.

Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, and Pilate washing his hands at the trial of Our Lord. That of Christ teaching is a very interesting one. He is shown as a youth seated on a throne with St Peter and St Paul, both of whom look very much like ancient Greek philosophers, standing on either side of Him. These figures, with their lack of background detail, reveal that the sculptor was closely following the ideas of Greek simplicity.

Early Christian sculpture, especially in the West, was a long way behind the perfection of the ancient Greeks, and it grew even poorer as time went on. The earliest of Byzantine sculpture was very much influenced by the Greeks, and was much better than that of the West. Most of it was, however, destroyed by the iconoclasts, and the only reminders of it which still exist were carried to Europe by traders and refugees.



52. THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS: A BYZANTINE CARVING

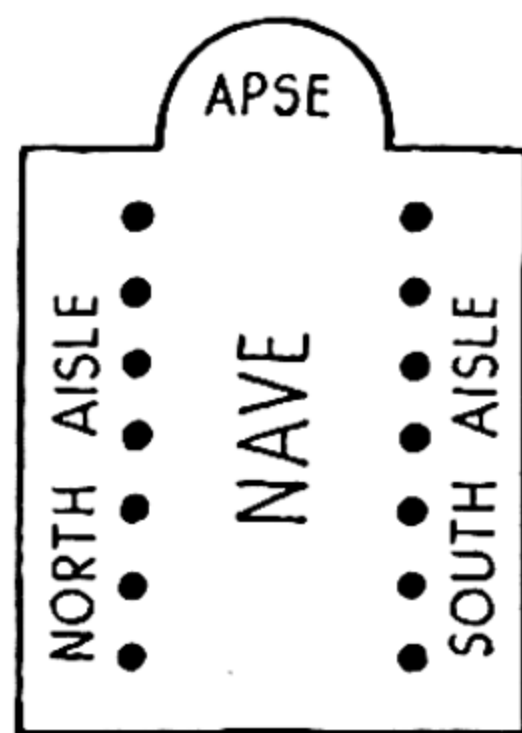
Sculpture was not so popular with the Eastern Christians. They much preferred their brilliantly coloured mosaics. The few examples of Byzantine sculpture are the reliefs on the exterior of St Mark's Church in Venice, which we shall be reading about in the next chapter.

6. *The Buildings of the Early Christians*

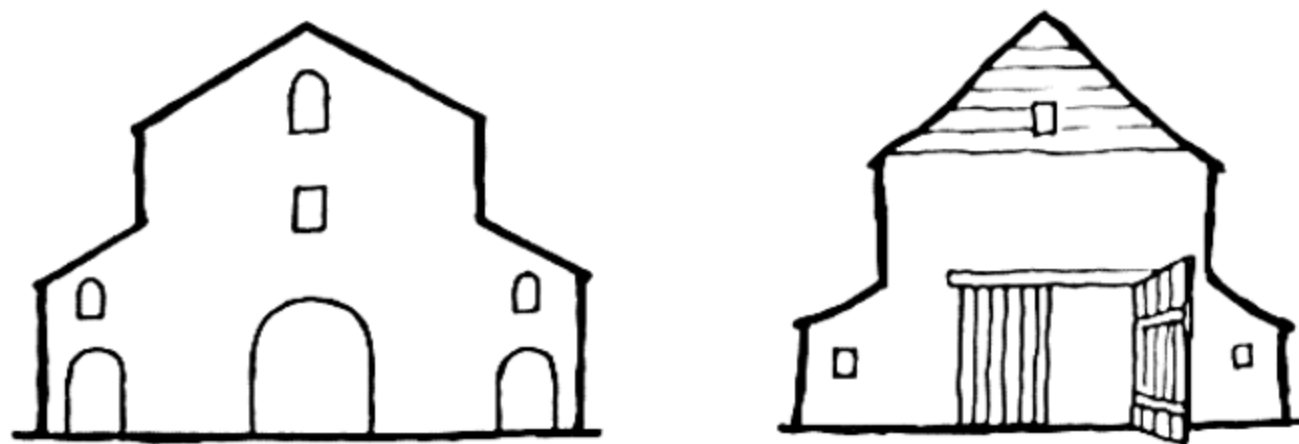
ALTHOUGH the Christians of the Roman Empire took over the basilicas and used them as churches, they needed many more places of worship, so rapid was the growth of Christianity. So they built more on the plan of the basilica, and this style was used over a large area of Europe. This copying of old Roman architecture is called *Romanesque*, and it flourished in Europe from the time of the destruction of Rome in the fifth century until the coming of Gothic architecture in the thirteenth century.

The Romanesque followed very faithfully the plan and features of the basilica, with its broad, lofty nave divided from the side-aisles by rows of columns, the round arch supported on thick pillars, and a sloping roof that was sometimes gilded. These churches are massive, heavy buildings, plain and rather grim in appearance. They look a little bit like a Roman or a Greek temple, except that they have no columns surrounding them. The aisles on each side rather spoil the look of the building, because they are so much like the lean-to one sees on a barn. In fact, the basilica church, with its pointed roof and plain walls, is very much like a barn in design.

For some time these basilica churches remained quite simple in their plan, which was oblong. Later they were built in the

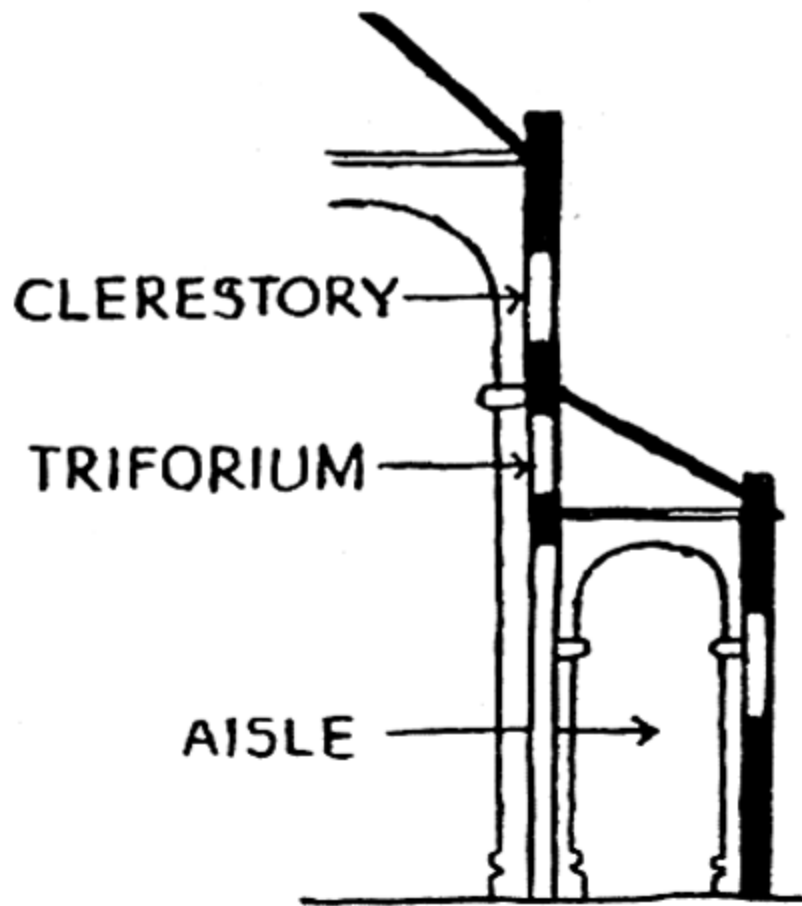


53. PLAN OF A BASILICA



54. BASILICA AND BARN

shape of a Latin cross (a cross with the upright longer than the arms projecting from it) by adding arms, called *transepts*, to the nave. The diagram here shows that the nave was higher than

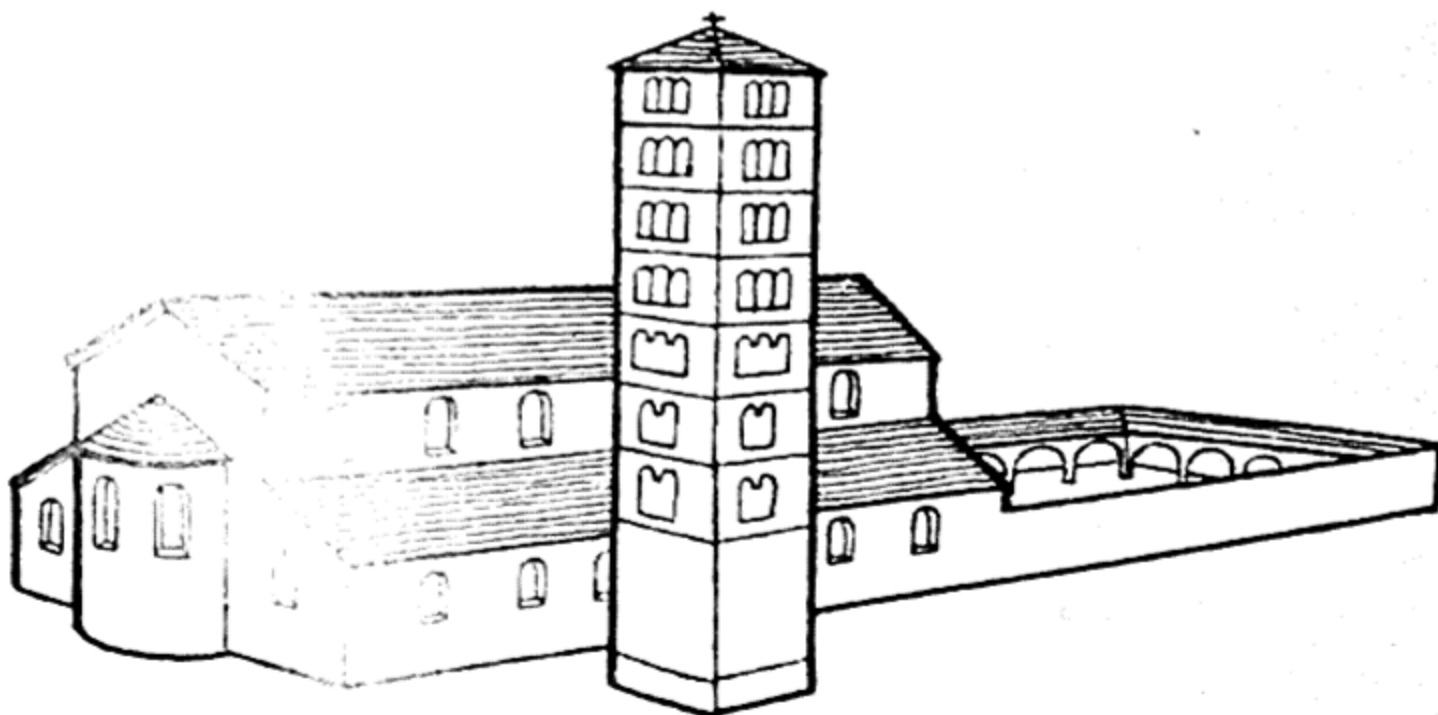


55. DIAGRAM SHOWING CLERESTORY AND TRIFORIUM

the side-aisles, thus leaving a large amount of wall-space above them, which was called the *clerestory*. When wooden roofs were used round-arched windows were cut into the clerestory, and the nave was fairly bright with daylight. But when stone roofs came into use the walls were strengthened by thick, strong pillars to hold the roof up. The side-aisles were given a second storey, which formed a gallery, known as the *triforium*. The number of windows had to be fewer to make room for these pillars, and the churches became much darker inside.

At first these churches were decorated with paintings, and it was not until the fifth century that mosaics were used. Sculpture, which was never encouraged by the clergy, was not used as decoration until about the fourth century, when it took the form of carved reliefs.

As I have mentioned the word 'reliefs' so many times, I must explain what they are and what they are like. There are four kinds. The first is *bas-relief*, in which the figures stand out



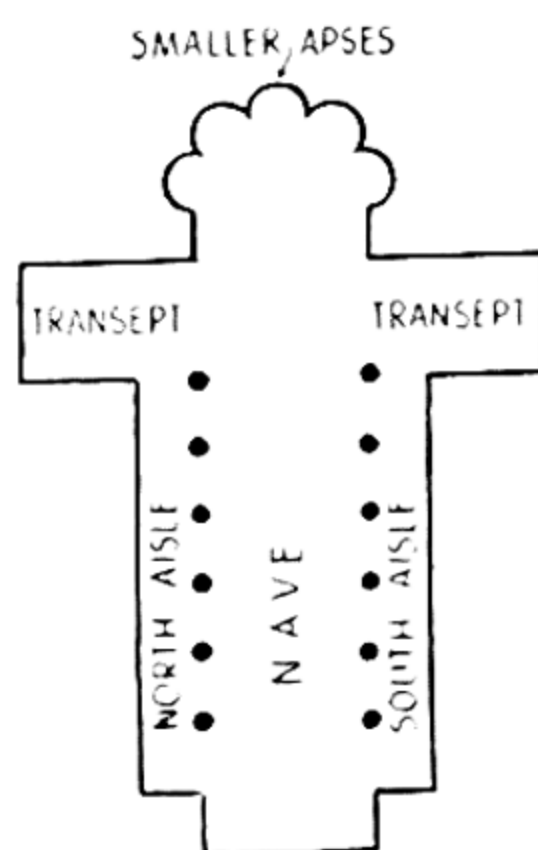
56. AN EARLY CHRISTIAN BASILICA

slightly from the background. Then there is the *sunken-relief*, where the background projects slightly in front of the figures. *Outline-relief* is one in which only the outline of the figures is cut; and lastly there is the *high-relief*, with figures that project quite a lot from the background.

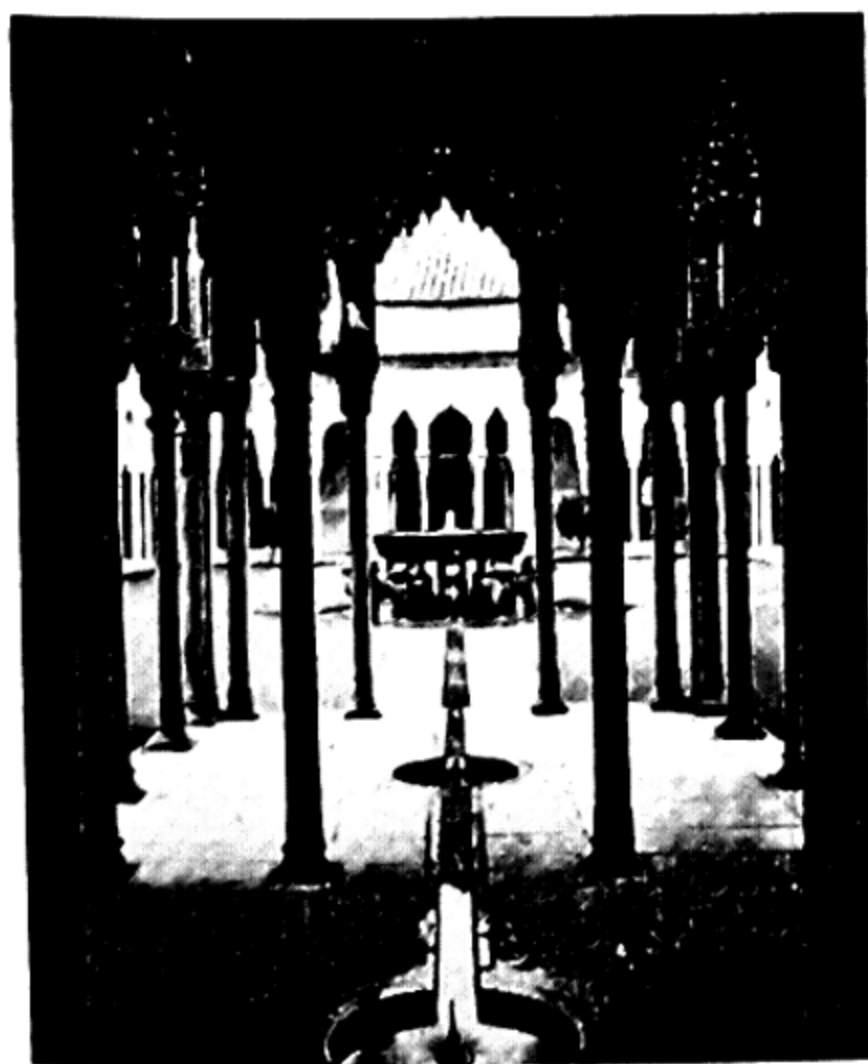
To return to our basilicas. We know that there was a semicircular bay, the apse, at one end where the magistrate used to sit. When the building became a church the clergy gathered in the apse, and the magistrate's seat was occupied by the bishop, and in front of him stood the altar. As the ceremonies grew more splendid this apse had to be enlarged, and the altar was moved back against the curved wall. Soon even more room was needed for more altars dedicated to various saints, and smaller apses were built on to the larger one. Then the transepts were added, and the Latin-cross plan came into being.

In Spain are a number of buildings very different in style and character from those of the rest of Europe. In the eighth century the Moors conquered the country, and the effects of their long occupation are shown in the architecture of that period.

The Moorish or Saracenic style of architecture is a branch of the Byzantine, and one of the most splendid examples of this style is the *Alhambra*, or Red Palace, in Granada. Although it was built by the Moorish kings at a much later date, being completed in the fourteenth century, it has all the features of the earlier Moorish buildings. With its lovely courts and pavilions, the peculiar shape of the arched doorways and windows, the marbles



57. THE LATIN-CROSS PLAN



58. COURTYARD OF THE LIONS, ALHAMBRA

and mosaics, the slender pillars and glazed tiles of many colours, we are reminded of the fairy-tale palaces we read about in stories from the Arabian Nights. On the walls are a number of beautiful and very intricate carvings, called *Arabesques*.

The Moors were Moslems, and when we speak of Moslems we think immediately of mosques, which are houses of worship for Moslems. These buildings are very similar in design all over the world, and are recognized by their domes and minarets,



59. SAN SOPHIA

The minarets were added at a later date.

those tall, pencil-like towers surmounted by a crescent, the symbol of Islam, as the cross is the symbol of Christianity. The interiors of these mosques are usually beautifully painted or decorated with mosaics and coloured tiles, and the windows are of stained glass in very simple geometric designs.

In Byzantium, or Constantinople, as it was now called, the Christians were erecting churches in a style that was new to them, but old to the East, and it was a style that had a few followers in Europe.

During the sixth century the Emperor Justinian rebuilt Constantine's church of *San Sophia*, which had been destroyed by fire. The new church must have been a truly magnificent sight, with its inner walls of different-coloured marbles draped with richly embroidered stuffs, its pillars of tinted marble with gold capitals, its ceilings of pure gold, and the picture of Christ as the Ruler of the World painted inside the vast dome. No wonder Justinian declared that the splendour of it outshone the temple of Solomon! Justinian was a lover of splendid buildings, and all the palaces and churches, with their squat towers, curving domes, and arched colonnades all over the Byzantine Empire. This was the most beautiful. Once a church, then a mosque, it is now a museum of Byzantine art.

With its huge central dome surrounded by smaller ones, it is the finest example of Byzantine architecture in existence. As

were most churches in the East, it is built in the shape of a Greek cross, a cross with each of its four arms the same length. Such a shape calls for either a square or a circular building around it.

Now, with an oblong building like a basilica, only a pointed roof is really suitable, but with a square or circular building either a flat roof or a dome is required. A dome is a much nobler crown for such a structure as the Byzantines erected. Domes had been known and used for a long time in Oriental countries, and the Christians of the East saw how impressive and beautiful they were. They did not content themselves with just one dome, however, but put several on a building, until it was topped by a series of lovely arcs.

The Romans were familiar with the dome, of which that of the Pantheon is a fine example, but they made their task easy by putting it over a round building, while the Byzantines built theirs on a square structure, which wasn't such an easy thing to do.

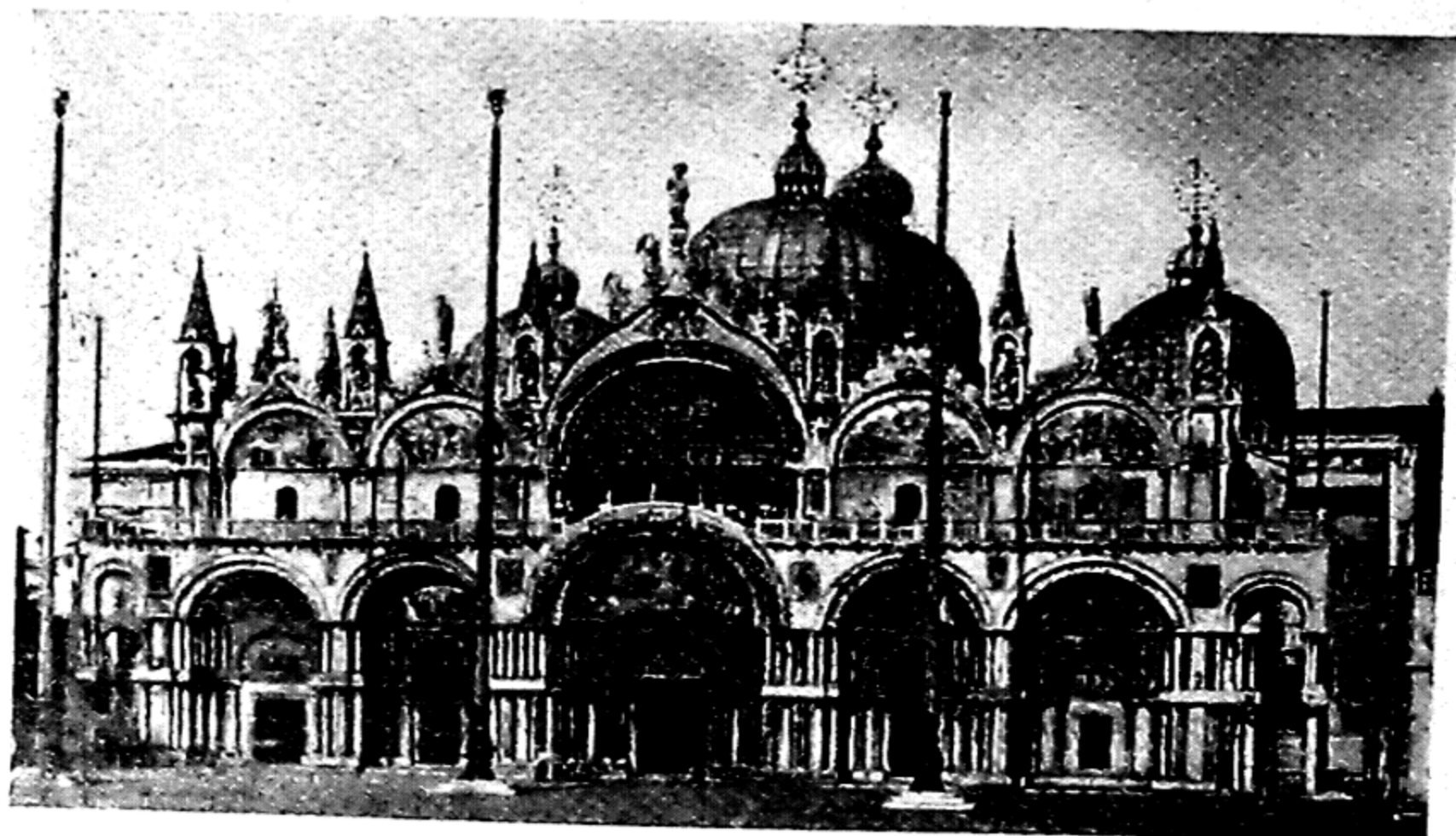
Columns were often used by the Romans merely for decoration and to add beauty and dignity to their heavy buildings, but in Byzantine architecture, as in the Greek, the column was no ornament. It had to help to support a great weight, the dome. So the capitals were not often ornamented, and, if carved at all, it was with only very shallow reliefs, because to cut deeply would have weakened them and caused them to break beneath the tremendous weight they bore.

Although this Eastern style never gained a strong hold in Europe, it was adopted to a certain extent in Italy. *St Mark's church* in Venice, built much later, between 977 and 1071, is a very much overdecorated imitation of the Byzantine, and, with its many pinnacles and domes, looks more like a mosque than a church. It was through their trade with the East that the Venetians gained their love of colour, and in *St Mark's* they show how well they learned from the Byzantines.

The pillars are of marble, the green domes glisten in the sunlight, colourful mosaics adorn the porticoes and the inside of the building. The exterior is ornamented with pure white alabaster sculptures of leaves, pomegranates, and grapes, and little birds and angels peer out at us from the midst of all these leaves and fruit. Behind them the background is of dazzling gold. A long portico, decorated inside and outside with marbles and mosaics, stretches along the wide front of the church. This porch was originally used as a meeting-place for penitents and

unbaptized people, who were not allowed inside the building during the most sacred parts of the Mass.

Meanwhile, what had been happening in our own country? During their long occupation of Britain the Romans had taught our forefathers how to plan and build cities of brick and stone like London, York, and Chester. They also built basilicas, temples, villas, theatres, and baths, just as they had built them in Rome and in the other countries they had conquered. Wherever



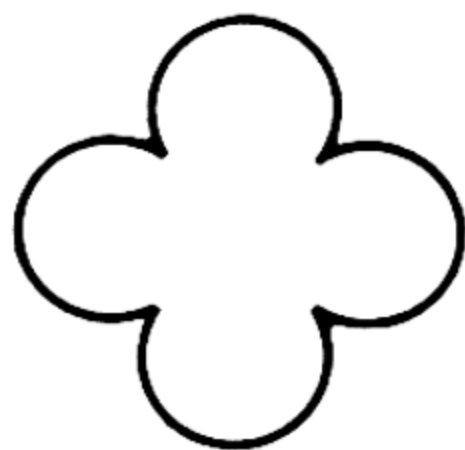
60. ST MARK'S, VENICE

they settled, the Romans taught how to build well. When Christianity came to our shores churches were built, too, erected on the plan of the basilica.

In A.D. 400 Rome was invaded by Huns and Vandals, and our soldiers in Britain were recalled to defend the greatest city in the world. The Britons, who had never had any great love for their foreign masters, and even less for their wonderful buildings, pulled down the baths, villas, and temples and, for some strange reason, began to build and live in houses made of mud and wattle. They evidently wanted to forget as quickly as possible all about the Romans and what they had been taught by them. They were content to live like this for many years, until missionaries and traders came from Rome and France and helped to civilize them, so that once more they began to build houses of wood, brick, and stone.

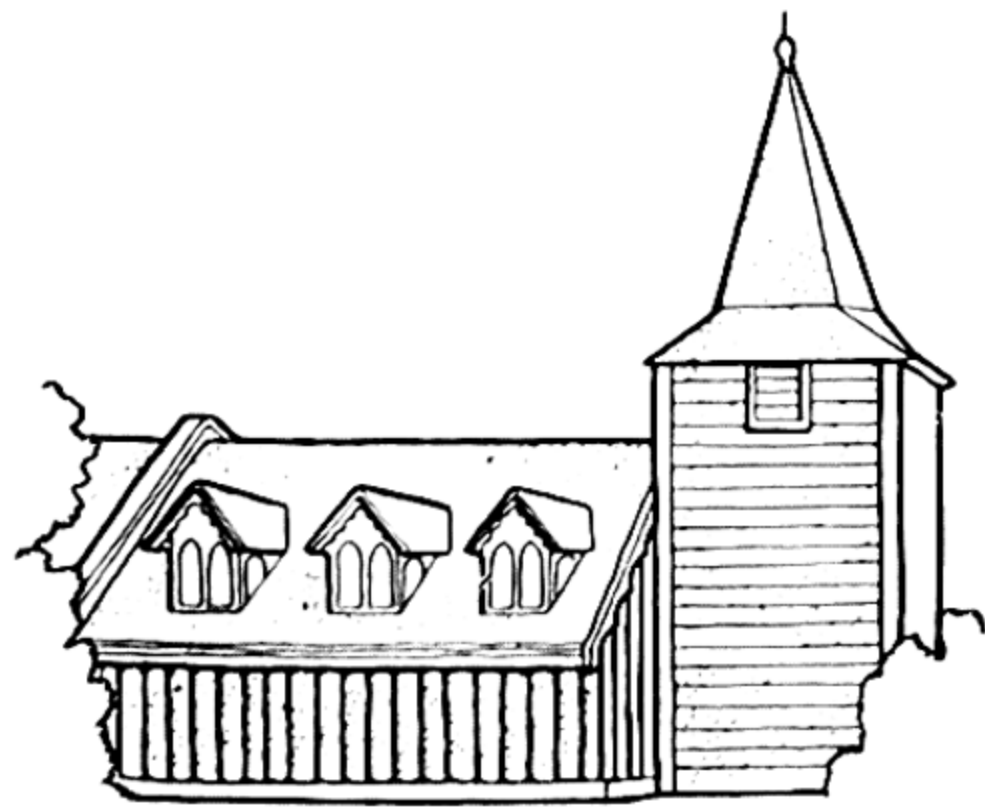
During the seventh century many churches were put up in our land, all more or less on the style of the basilica, and at

the close of the century St Wilfrid built a church at Hexham in the form of a round tower with four arms projecting from it. Some four hundred years later a twelfth-century historian, William of Malmesbury, wrote of this church that, with its decorations and images all beautifully carved and painted, it reminded him of the glories of Rome. He talks also about his own Saxon church at Malmesbury, saying that it was more beautiful and bigger than any ancient building to be seen in England. So it becomes quite plain that the bigger Saxon churches of the seventh and eighth centuries were as good as those anywhere else in Europe.



61. QUATREFOIL DESIGN

At Athelney King Alfred (famous for his burned cakes) erected a church in the shape of a cross with rounded ends to the arms. This shape or design is called *quatrefoil*, which means four-leaved, and it can be seen carved on many Saxon fonts still in use in some of our oldest country churches. It was often used as a design in the illuminated manuscripts of the tenth century, and in the eleventh century windows were made in this shape. So you see that already the tardy Britons were beginning to use their imaginations, and even a small detail like this was sufficient to make their buildings just a little different from those elsewhere. The invention of the quatrefoil design can be called a Saxon contribution to the history of European art.



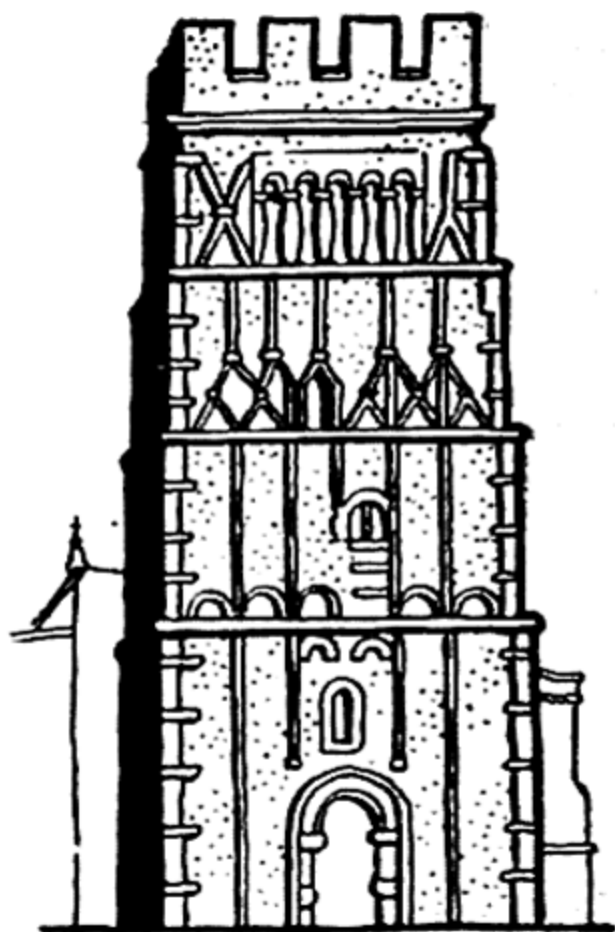
62. THE WOODEN WALLS OF GREENSTEAD CHURCH

The tower was added at a later date.

M.A.—5

Unfortunately, very little remains of the buildings of this period, although there is at Greenstead, in Essex, a timber church, built in 1013, with walls of oak-tree-trunks split in half and set upright close together. It is the only example we have of a Saxon wooden church. There are still in existence

a few towers, like those at *Earls Barton*, Northampton, and Deerhurst, Gloucestershire, and some crypts and chancel-arches



63. TOWER OF EARLS
BARTON CHURCH

and doorways in odd, out-of-the-way churches. Saxon buildings cannot be called beautiful, nor do they show any great architectural skill, because the Saxons were better as carpenters than as stone-masons. It is interesting to see how the builders, who had for so long been accustomed to working with wood, often made their stone buildings look as if they were constructed of wood. The picture of *Earls Barton* shows the ornamentation of cross-strips of stone that resemble the wooden beams used in their wooden buildings.

The Saxons had not quite forgotten what the Romans had taught them, for we can see that they copied features of

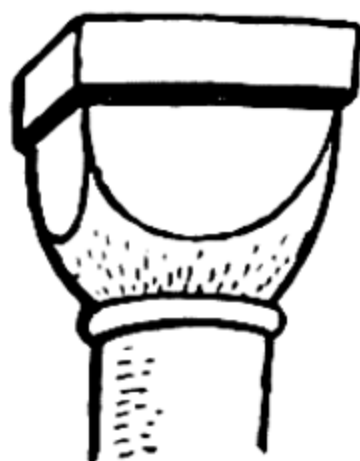
Roman buildings. There are semicircular arches above doors and windows, and the capitals of the columns are very rough imitations of the Roman, some being quite plain and others having foliage carved on them.

7. The Age of Abbeys and Castles

THE NORMAN version of the Romanesque was introduced into England by Edward the Confessor, who, with the help of masons hired from Normandy, built Westminster Abbey, 1050-1066. This abbey was much altered by Henry III in the thirteenth



64. A NORMAN
PILLAR



65. CUSHION
CAPITAL

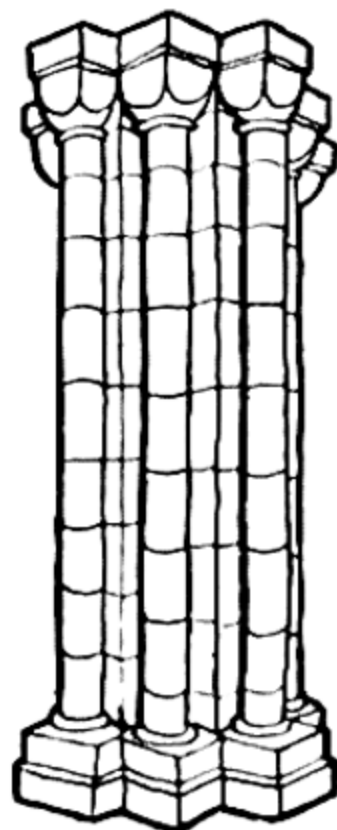


66. A WHEEL-WINDOW

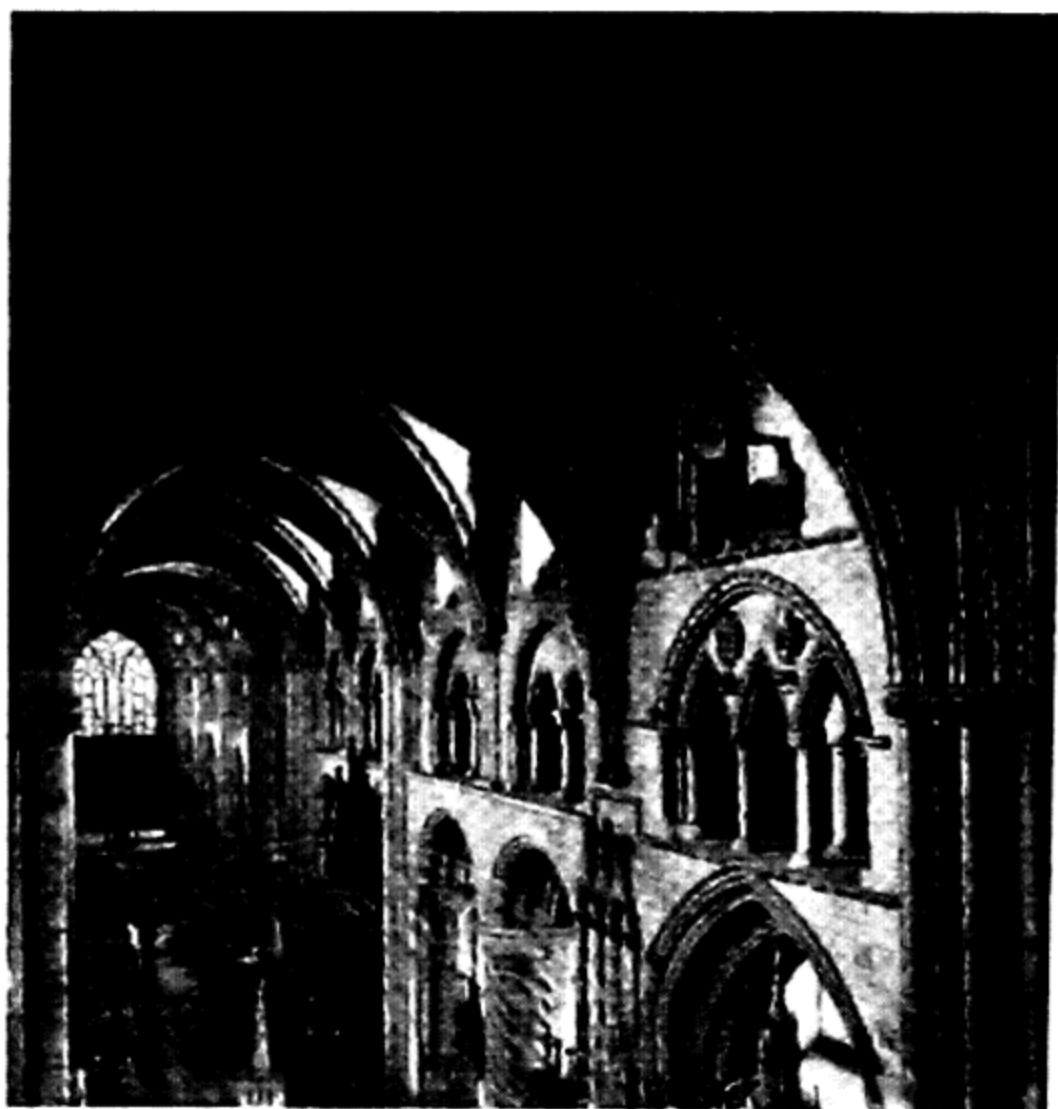
century, and of Edward's building only the Dark Entry, the Chapel of the Pyx, and the crypt of the monks' dormitory remain.

Then came William the Conqueror (need I tell you the date?), bringing with him his monks, who built vast churches and abbeys and cathedrals while his noblemen erected their huge, grim castles.

Norman architecture had arrived, and was to remain until about 1190. It is a style easily recognized by its thick, short pillars with *cushion* capitals, strong walls sometimes more than three feet thick, and narrow, round-topped windows. Sometimes we see a completely circular window, known as a *wheel-window*. The doors are low and wide and set deep into the wall, with round arches above them. The moulding round them is carved in a simple zigzag pattern. The pillars supporting the roof stand either singly



67. CLUSTERED
COLUMNS

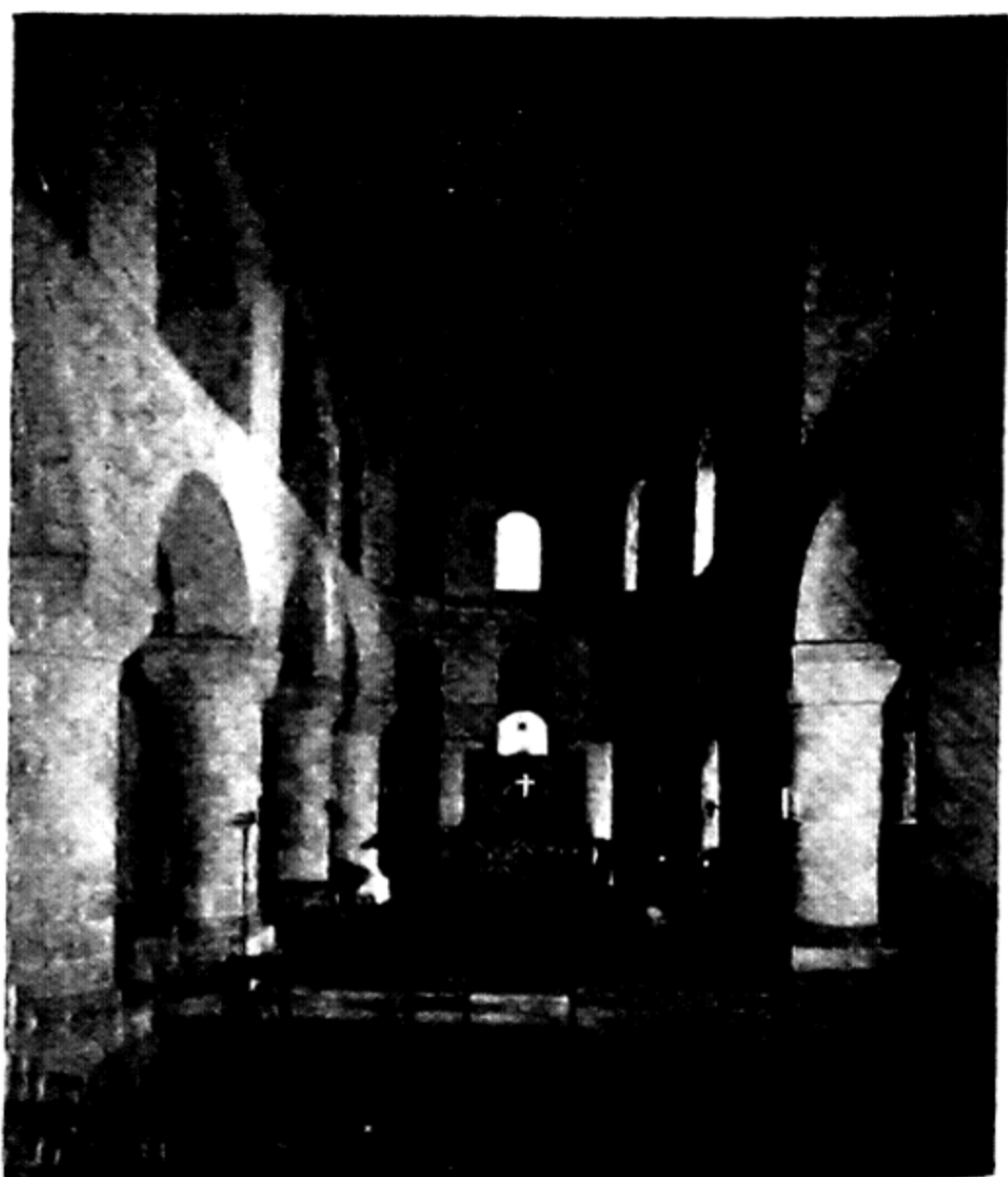


68. DURHAM CATHEDRAL, SHOWING
TRIFORIUM AND CLERESTORY

or in groups of three or four together, with plain round arches between each group. In the larger churches three tiers of arches were built, the lowest being semicircular, those above them (called the triforium) consisting of two or perhaps three smaller arches inside a larger one, and above these the clerestory, small semicircular arches, some of which were pierced to let in the light. The picture of *Durham Cathedral* shows all these features.

Crypts and aisles were usually vaulted, and the ceiling of the nave was generally flat. A short, square tower was placed where the transepts crossed the nave.

Parts of Canterbury Cathedral and nearly all of Durham, Rochester, and Peterborough Cathedrals are good specimens of Norman churches. The nave of Peterborough is a splendid example of the early Norman. Its wooden roof is painted in a design that seems almost Eastern, and it is one of the oldest and most beautiful painted things in this country. Another fine early Norman building, built about 1080, is the *Chapel of St John* in the Tower of London. Of the later



69. AN EARLY NORMAN CHURCH :
CHAPEL OF ST JOHN, TOWER OF LONDON

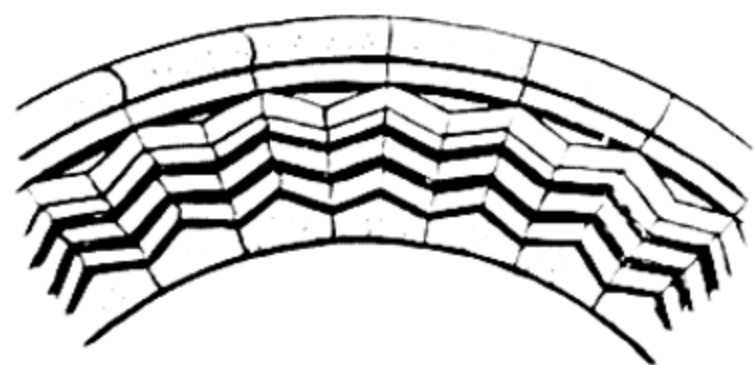
Norman churches *St Bartholomew the Great* in Smithfield, London, is without doubt one of the finest. A number of country churches, although partly rebuilt and much restored (and not always very successfully), have Norman doorways and windows.

Although figure sculpture as decorations in churches did not play a great part until the end of the thirteenth century, the Normans carved all sorts of strange beasts, weird human heads, birds with long beaks, heads of demons, and scenes from scripture and legend. As the chisel was not known until the twelfth century, nearly all these carvings were done with an axe, and if you look



70. A LATER NORMAN CHURCH :
ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT

carefully into them you will see the sharp cuts of this unwieldy tool.



71. ZIGZAG ORNAMENT

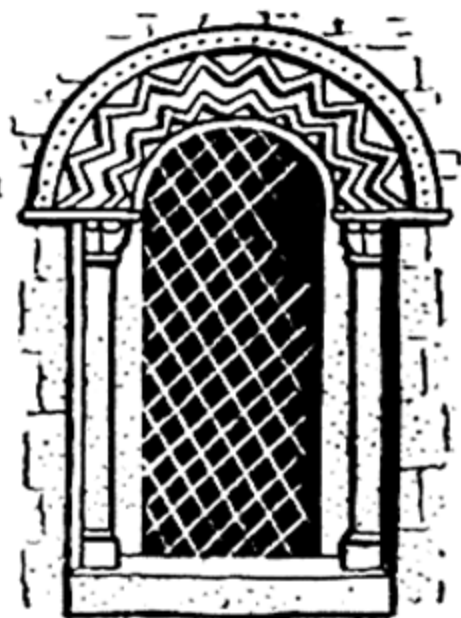
The interiors were decorated with rather sombre colours in simple patterns of bands and zigzags. There were also large pictures of saints and of the Last Judgment. Some fragments of such decorations, now very faded, may be seen in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, and at Ely, Chichester, Romsey, and

Norwich. The latter, begun in 1096, is the best preserved of all the Norman churches.



72. NORMAN DECORATED CAPITALS

While the monks were busily erecting their abbeys and cathedrals and preaching peace to a conquered people, the nobles, who were never quite sure that



73. A NORMAN WINDOW

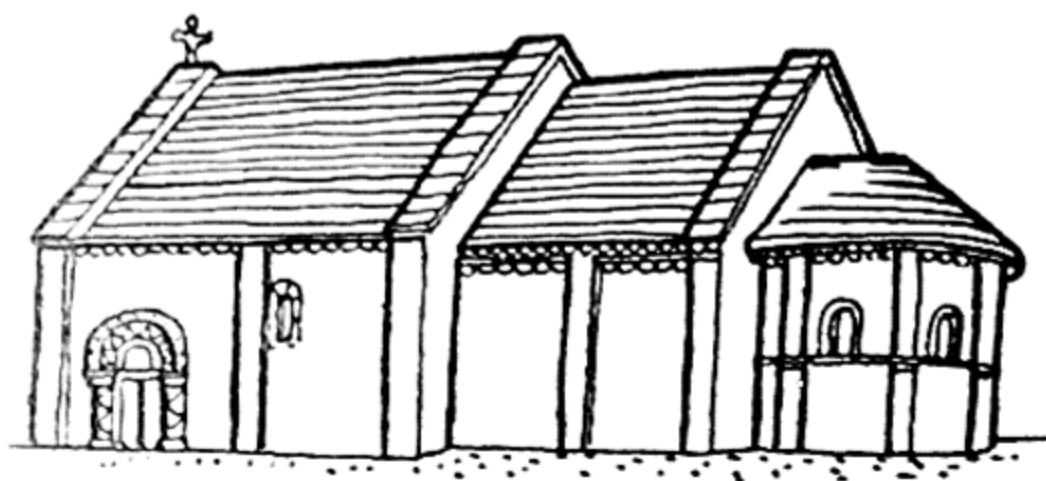
peace would come, were just as energetically building their great castles. They were built for protection, and little attempt was made to beautify them, although Rochester Castle has some fine carved windows. They were built on hills, and usually had a river on one side to give extra protection. If a hill wasn't available at the chosen spot, then one had to be made. A great mound of earth was thrown up, and on this a strong keep, or tower, was erected.

Around this was a courtyard ringed by a stout wall, called a bailey-wall. Outside this was the moat, surrounded by a wooden fence. The Tower of London, in spite of the many extra buildings of various styles and periods added to it during its long life, and the castles of Newcastle and Dover are all good examples of Norman keeps.

The Norman period lasted only a little more than a hundred years, but what an amazing number of buildings they erected in that short time! No matter where you go, you will find some signs of Norman occupation—hundreds of castles and churches which still show traces of Norman work. They were the greatest builders Europe had seen since the Romans.



74. A NORMAN DOORWAY



75. A NORMAN CHURCH

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8. *The Age of Cathedrals*

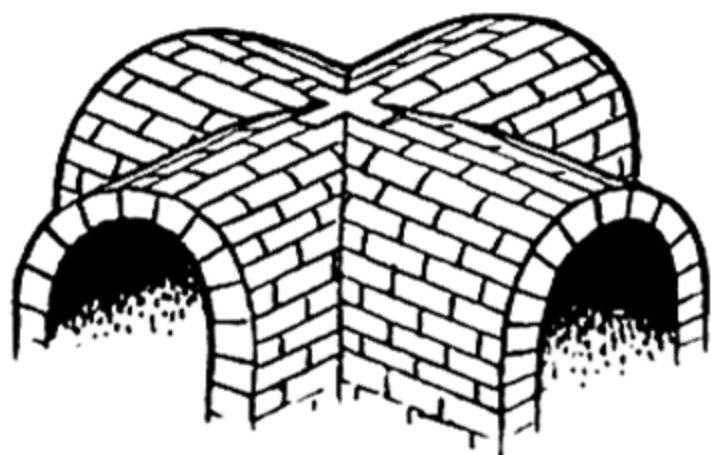
PERHAPS men were growing a little tired of the dark and gloomy Romanesque churches. They were all very well up to a point, with their cool, and often chilly, interiors and narrow windows which didn't let in much light. This dimness and coolness was quite suitable for Southern countries, where the sun shone warmly all day and nearly every day, but in the Northern countries, where the weather was often cold and foggy, more light in the churches would be more welcome.

So the builders of France created a new style of architecture, with graceful pointed arches, wonderful vaulted roofs which soared much higher than any Romanesque church, and larger windows that filled the church with light. This new style spread rapidly through all Europe, and started an age of intensive building, with masons, carvers, glass-makers, and carpenters working day and night erecting their beautiful churches, halls, and manor-houses. It has been said that the thirteenth century was the most wonderful and glorious age since men first learned to build.

During its latter years the Norman style had become less heavy and a little more graceful, and pointed arches were beginning to make their appearance, although the walls remained as thick as ever. So you see that this new style did not arise as quickly or as suddenly as it may appear from the way I have written about it. No new style of architecture, painting, or sculpture ever comes about quickly. It is not a sudden idea that strikes one man. One form of art grows from another, each a branch of one main idea, and this new architecture grew from the Romanesque slowly, and was really just an improvement upon the older form and a correcting of some of its most obvious weaknesses.

This new style was called *Gothic*, but not by the French. It was the Italians who gave it this strange and rather ugly name, and it wasn't meant to be a compliment, either. The Italians thought that there was only one style of architecture that was

dignified, beautiful, and as perfect as any man-made thing could be, and that was the Romanesque, of which they were so fond and proud. When they saw the work of the French architects they were not very polite in their remarks about it. They said



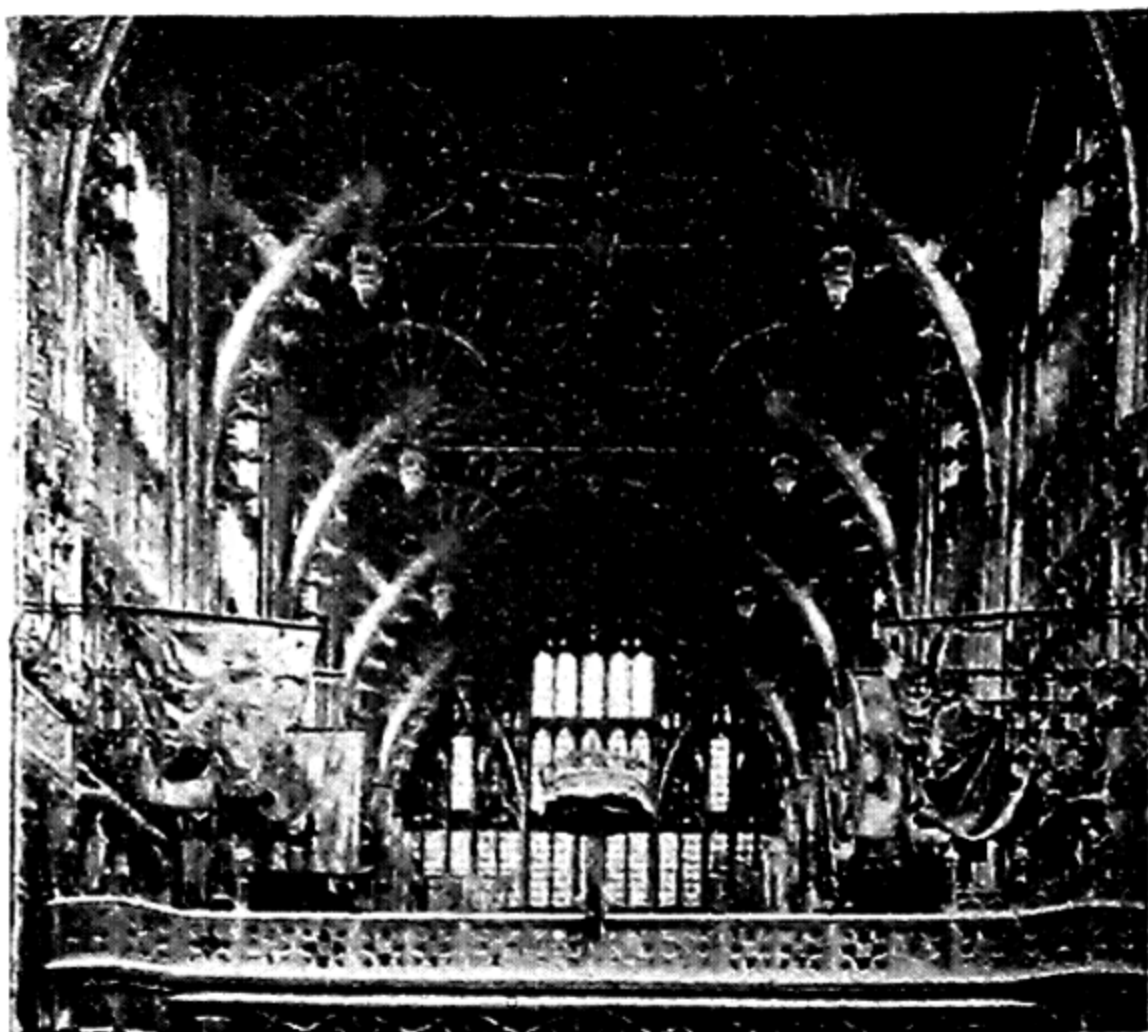
76. BARREL-VAULTING

it was just a horrible collection of pinnacles, spires, and decorations, of which most was very bad and very little really nice. All the peoples who lived north of the Alps were, to the Italians, not much better than barbarians, who knew nothing of beauty and art, or they would never have dreamed of departing from

the pure styles of the ancient Greeks and Romans. In short, they were Goths, a name which means barbarians.

The first aim of the Gothic builders was to do away with the massive walls of the Romanesque style, to make them thinner and let in more light by having more and larger windows. But to have thinner walls which, weakened by more and larger windows let into them, still had to be strong enough to support a heavy stone roof was a difficult problem which took time to solve.

The vaulted roofs of the Norman churches were built like a railway tunnel, in what is known as *barrel-vaulting*. The Gothic builder abandoned this method, and invented a new scheme for making the roof with a steeper slope, thus adding to the height of the building. His buildings became more like marvellous feats of engineering, which were not, however, always successful, for sometimes towers fell down and roofs caved in. He got over these



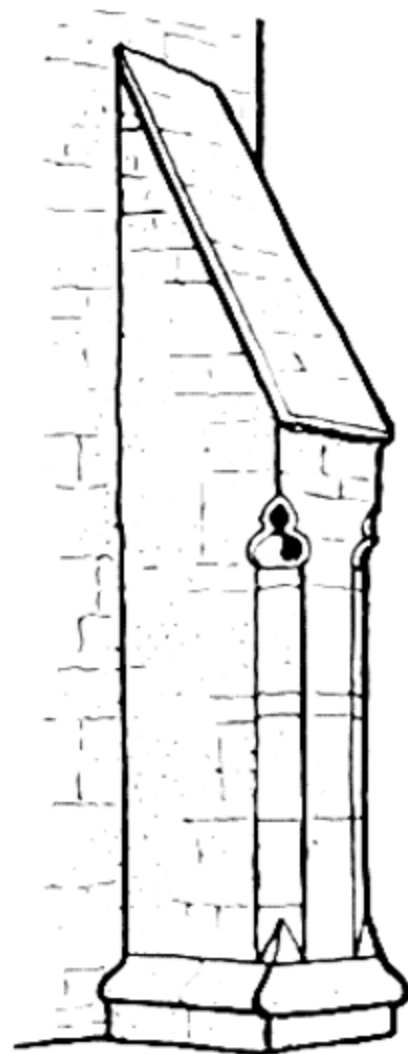
77. FAN-VAULTING OF HENRY VII'S CHAPEL, WESTMINSTER ABBEY

difficulties in time, and has left us some of the most beautiful buildings in the world.

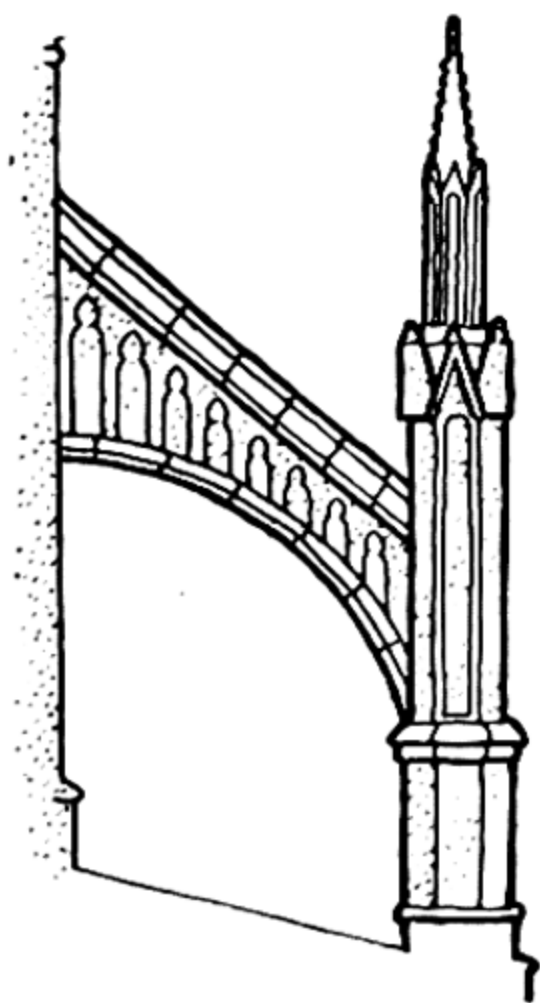
The roof of a Gothic church is called a *vault*. Being of stone, these roofs were very heavy, and they were held up only by thin, curved ribs of stone. This method is called *ribbed-vaulting*, and one of the earliest examples of ribbed-vaulting is to be seen in the choir-aisle of Durham Cathedral. Later on more ribs were added, and they spread out fanwise like the spread-out fingers of an open hand, and the stones between them were beautifully decorated. You can see an example of *fan-vaulting* in Henry VII's chapel in Westminster Abbey.

Now, imagine one of these ribs as a thin, springy cane bent into a half-hoop. Holding a cane in this manner, you will feel both ends pushing against your hands as the cane tries to straighten itself again. Ask a friend to place his hand on top of it and press, even very lightly, and you will find it still more difficult to keep the ends from slipping from your grasp. Your friend's hand represents the roof, your hands the walls. You can easily imagine now how great must have been the pressure against the walls and how easily they could be pushed outward.

If, while you are holding your cane still bent and trying to resist the weight pressing down on it, another friend pushes against your hands, you will find the cane less difficult to hold. And that is how the builder overcame the problem of stopping his walls from being pushed out. He erected *buttresses*, heavy masses of stone built so that they leaned against the walls. Higher up, where the ribs pushed against the walls, he put *flying-buttresses*, which, like long arms, thrust against the pushing of the ribs. The aerial view of *Notre-Dame* of Paris shows how these flying-buttresses served a useful

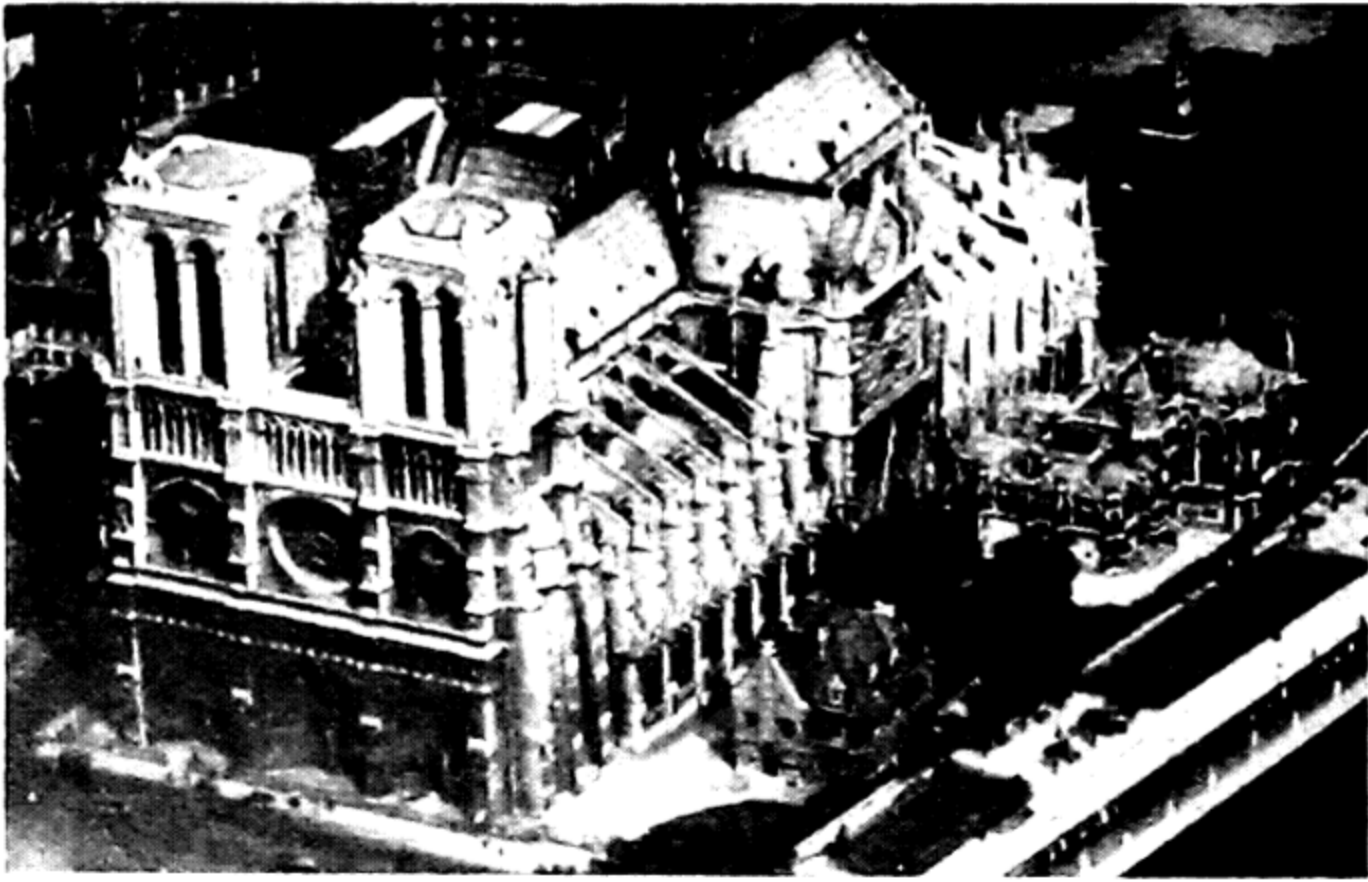


78. A BUTTRESS



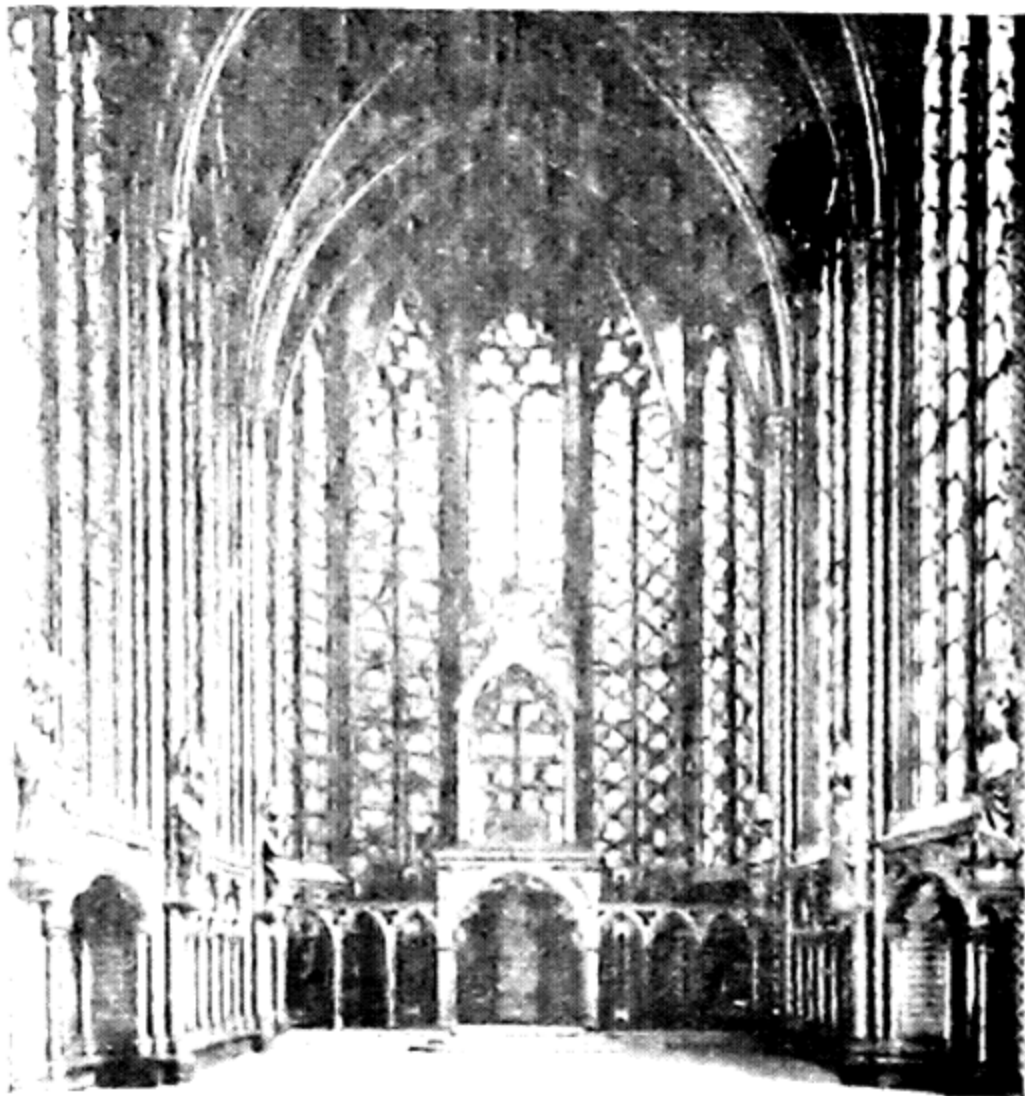
79. A FLYING-BUTTRESS

purpose and at the same time made quite a decorative ornament to the outside of the building. In many of our towns which suffered during the bombing of the last war



SO. AERIAL VIEW OF NOTRE-DAME, PARIS

you will see a house propped up by a huge beam which straddles the pavement and has its other end wedged high up against the wall of the house. This beam serves a purpose similar to that of the flying-buttress.

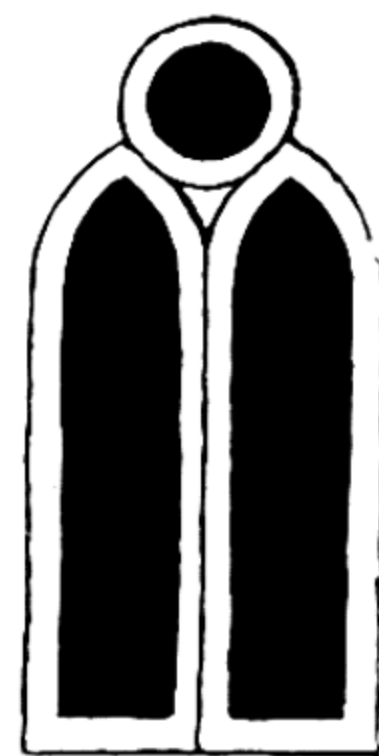


ST. SAINTE-CHAPELLE, PARIS

The pillars of a Gothic church were extremely slender and fragile, nothing at all like the strong, hefty columns of a Norman church. They were little more than thin stone rods, yet they did not bend or snap in spite of the heavy roof they supported. In the picture of *Sainte-Chapelle* in Paris, built for St Louis of France in 1246, you can see how little solid wall there was left after the huge windows had been put in. Looking at these

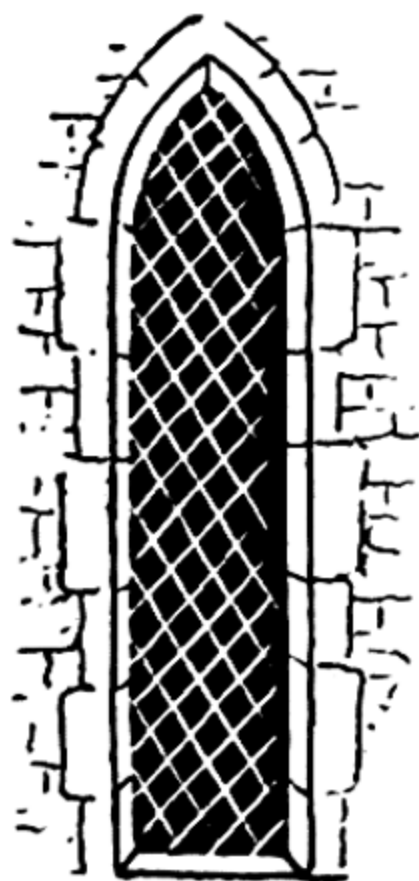
walls, which seem to be almost entirely of glass, we realize what a big job those thin pillars have to do. This chapel is one of the most perfect specimens of thirteenth-century Gothic buildings in Paris, and it has also some of the finest stained-glass windows.

With less wall-space available for them to paint on, the artists found there was not much need for their work. But an Oriental invention came to their aid. In the East stained-glass windows had been known for a long time, but in the West they had never been popular, although Venice, then the centre of the European glass industry, had made some stained-glass windows in the tenth century. Some of the oldest in this country are in Canterbury Cathedral.

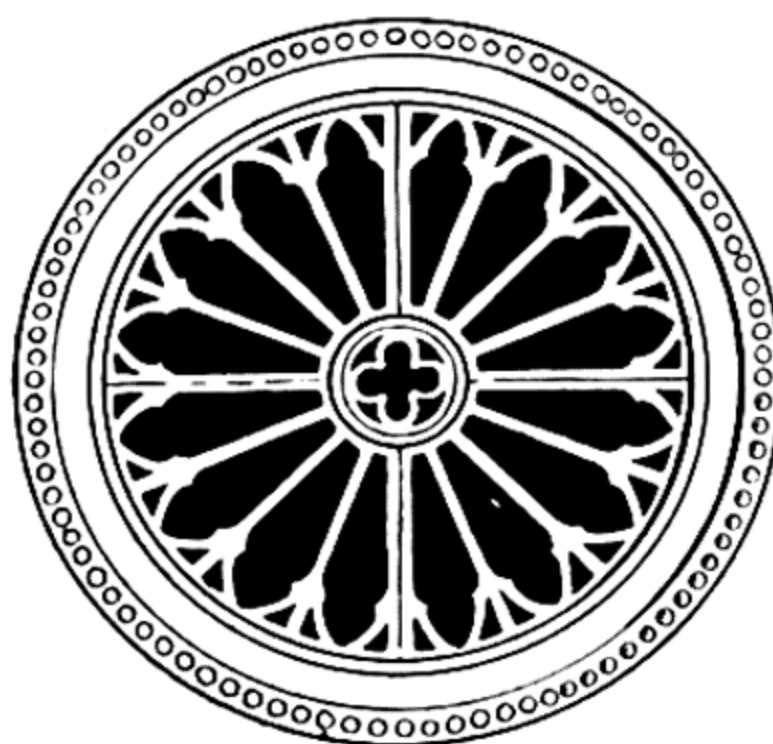


82. PLATE
TRACERY

In the top part of the windows of a Gothic church will be seen some very elaborate stone-work called *tracery*. In its earliest form it was just a round hole above two *lancets* placed close together, and this was called *plate tracery*. (Lancet, the name given to the earliest form of Gothic window, was so called because it was pointed at the top like the head of a lance.) Later the lancets and their head-ornaments were grouped five or seven together, thus making one large window. Circular windows, called *rose-windows*, which were developed from the Norman wheel-window,



83. LANCET-
WINDOW



84. ROSE-WINDOW

were also used, and some of these had very intricate tracery. Other tracery designs were called *trefoil*, *quatrefoil*, and *cinquefoil*. In France the tracery was designed to represent flames of fire, and was known as *flamboyant*.



85. FLAMBOYANT
TRACERY

The English Gothic church was a much better designed and better proportioned building than that of the French, which was nearly always too high and too wide for its length. The English made their churches longer and narrower, although Westminster Abbey is more like the French in its dimensions, being three times as high as it is wide. The main beauties of the French churches lie in the deep doorways with their groups of beautifully carved figures of saints and prophets, of which we shall

be reading more in the next chapter. Generally, the exteriors of their Gothic churches are finer than ours, and the window tracers are much more ornate.



Trefoil



Quatrefoil

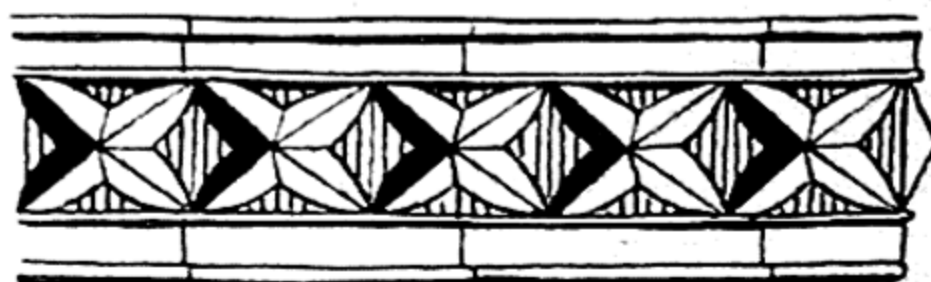


Cinquefoil

86. TRACERY

Though the English may not have had such rich carvings as the French, their Gothic work of the thirteenth century is still very beautiful. A common form of decoration of that period was the *dog-tooth*, which was carved on the walls and round many of the windows and doorways. Southwark Cathedral has almost two thousand of these wonderful ornaments in long lines round the windows behind the high altar.

Even the Italians, who had once said such hard things about it, eventually adopted the Gothic style, and made their version of it quite different from that of any other country. For instance, they never put spires



87. DOG-TOOTH ORNAMENT

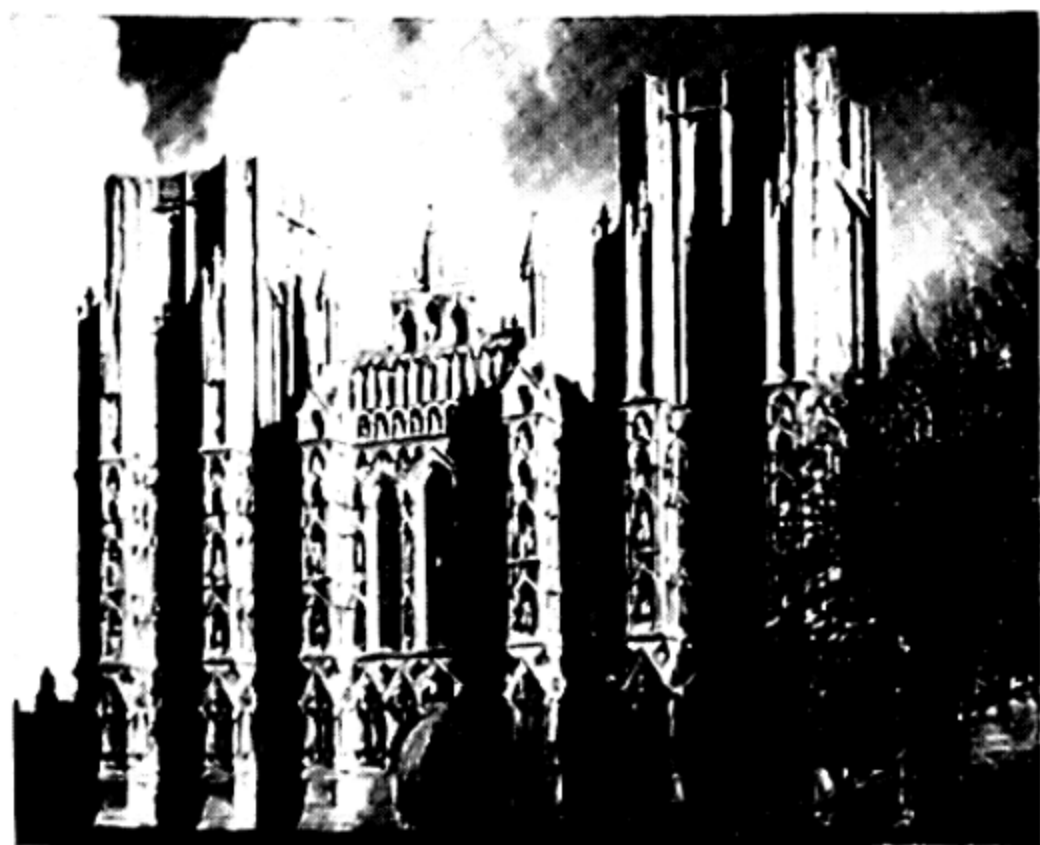
on their churches, as we did. They kept their bell tower, called a campanile, separate from the main building. The stone-work of our cathedrals remains exposed to the air, but in Italy many of the churches were built of brick covered over with coloured marble arranged in patterns or bands. (How they clung to the old Roman idea of giving false impressions!) Both Siena and Pisa Cathedrals have broad bands of black and white marble round the outside walls, which gives them a peculiar 'zebra' effect.



88. SIENA CATHEDRAL

English Gothic architecture is divided into three styles—*Early English* (1200–1300), *Decorated* (1300–1400), and *Perpendicular* (1400–1550).

Some of our finest cathedrals are built in the Early English style, among them being Salisbury and Wells, with its west front covered with statues of saints. The windows are tall and narrow in groups of three, five, or seven, with delicate traceries of various sizes and patterns. In the larger churches the pillars

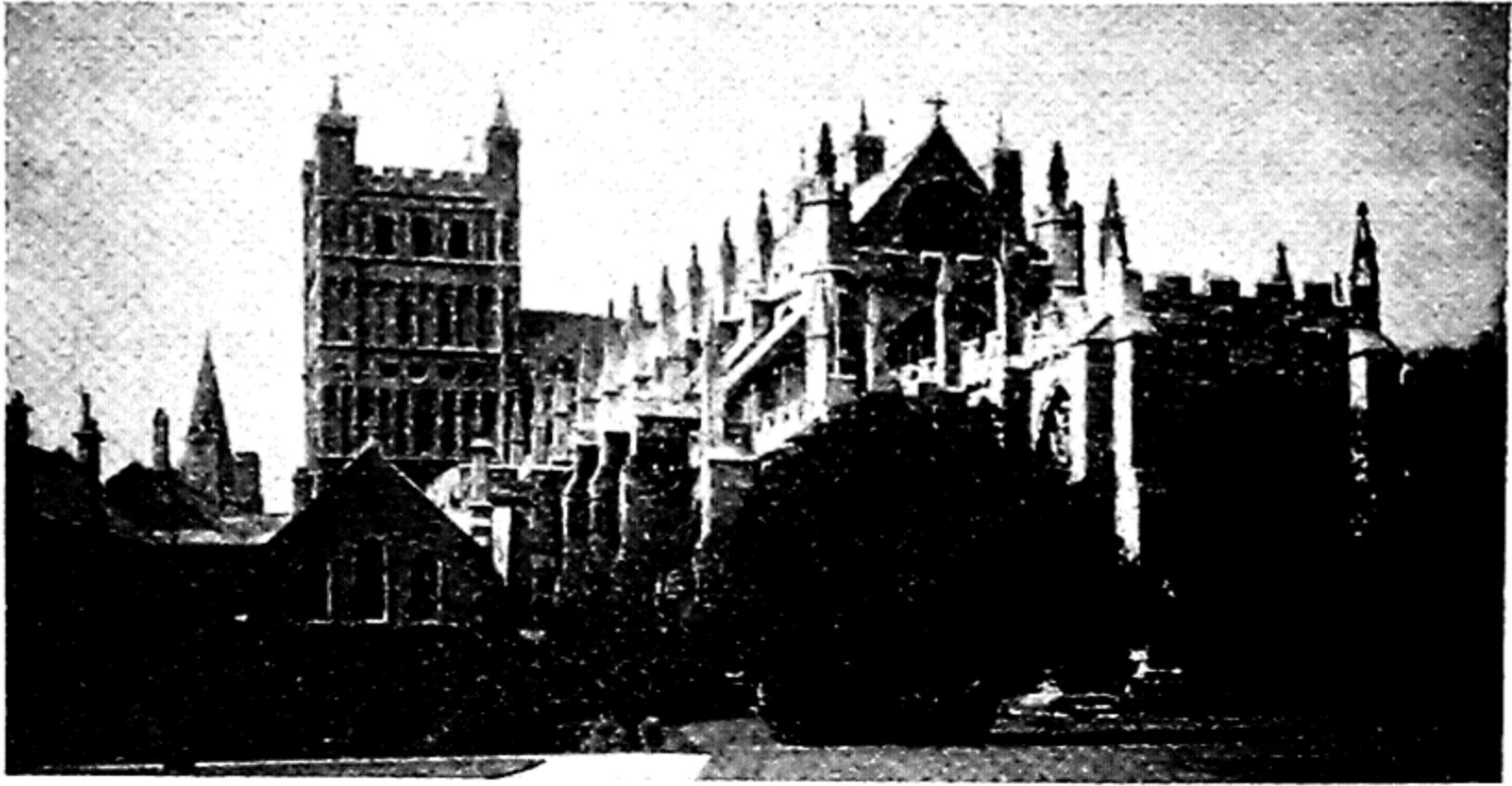


89. AN 'EARLY ENGLISH' CHURCH: WELLS CATHEDRAL

consisted of four or more small, thin ones around a larger one. The smaller pillars were sometimes of polished marble, so that they showed up clearly against the grey stone of the larger one. The tops of the pillars were carved with foliage, small animals, and flowers. The towers are taller than those

of the Norman churches, and are usually surmounted with a spire, which was quite low at first, but was later made higher.

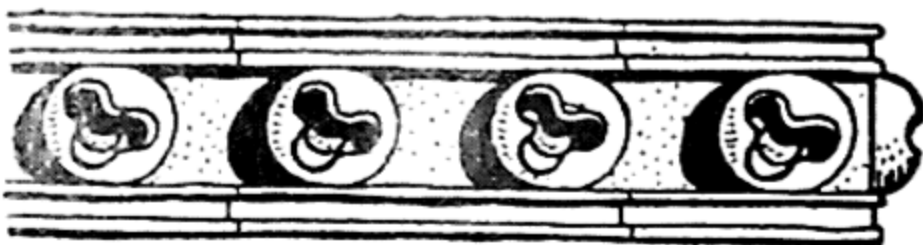
The Decorated, as its name tells us, was a style that was more decorative than the Early English. The arches were still



90. A 'DECORATED' CHURCH : EXETER CATHEDRAL

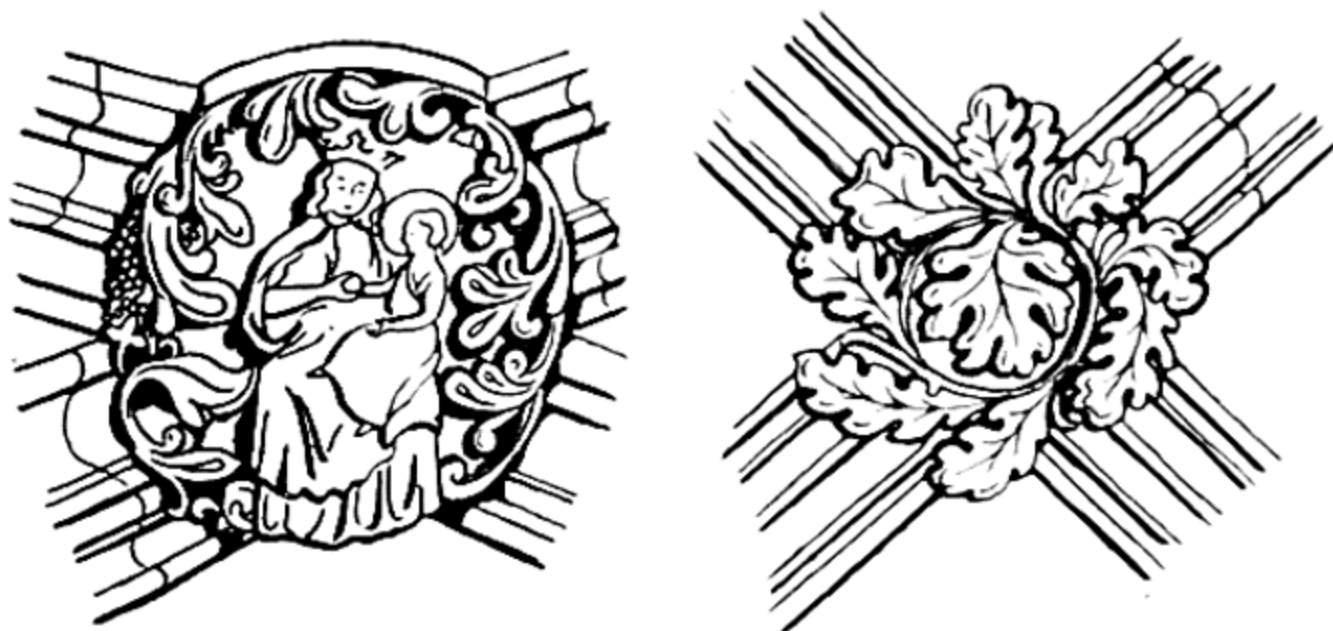
pointed, but wider and not quite so steep, the pillars more elaborate, the windows bigger, with very complicated tracery and, like those of the former style, filled with stained glass. The west window of York Minster is one of the most beautiful of the Decorated style in this country. There is more decoration, too, round doors and windows and pillars, and tombs are wreathed with stone garlands of fruit and flowers. Three tombs of that period are on the left of the High Altar in Westminster Abbey. The towers are lighter and have carved pinnacles. During the Decorated period the builders put decorations and ornaments wherever they wanted to, with the result that the buildings became greatly over-ornamented and had little of the elegance and dignity of the Early English. The most used ornament, seen generally in the mouldings round the

windows, was the *ball-flower*, which replaced the *dog-tooth*. Vaultings became more complicated, with many more ribs with carved *bosses* where the ribs met.



91. BALL-FLOWER ORNAMENT

The last style, the Perpendicular, gets its name from the window tracery, which is of perpendicular, or upright, lines.



92. BOSSES

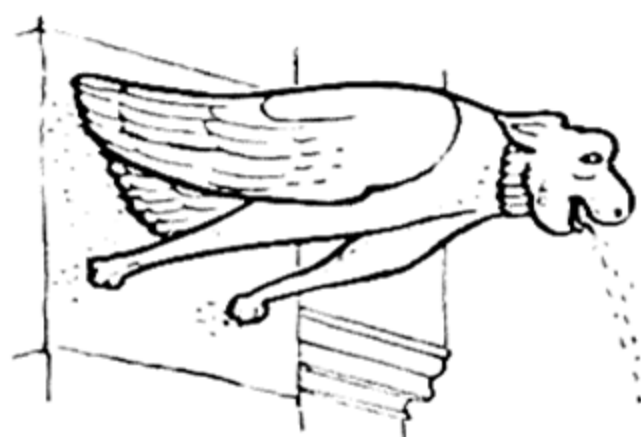
The walls were now large windows, so that the church seemed to be all of glass and very little stone. The arches were not quite so tall or so sharply pointed, and the pillars much thinner. The capitals were much smaller, and were no longer very important. In some churches they disappeared completely, because the columns merged into the moulding of the arch. Above them the roof was of fan-vaulting.

The sculptor must have enjoyed himself, for we see signs of his humour in the most unlikely places. Over the doorways and arches and in the panels of the parapets high up on the towers he put ugly gargoyles, heads of saints, angels, demons, dragons, goblins, martyrs, and strange beasts that never lived, all mingling together on friendly terms. At Wells Cathedral a very saintly bishop had the very useful gift of being able to cure toothache. To commemorate



93. A 'PERPENDICULAR' CHURCH : KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE

this good man a sculptor carved a large number of heads, some bandaged and some swollen with an aching tooth. One gay carver at Chartres shows us an ass playing what



94. A GARGOYLE

seems to be a mandolin. There were no limits to his imagination, and nothing was too fantastic for him. Wooden benches, too, often came in for a share of his work, for the carver of the Middle Ages did not spare his efforts, and on these he carved fables, legends, and humorous figures.

Walking among the quiet cloisters and beneath the sweeping arches of these beautiful buildings, we get a feeling of peace, security, and restfulness. Beneath the sheer wonder of the vaulted roof the stained-glass windows shed soft, glowing colours over the slim grey pillars and the worn stone floor. These buildings reveal the pride and skill of countless masons, artists, and carvers who lived for their work, and, during the years of building, handed on their tasks to their sons and grandsons, and all of them carved and decorated and laid the stones with love, enthusiasm, and a solid faith that enabled them to take the greatest care with every small detail of their work.

The private houses of the people were mainly of what is now known as the half-timbered style, in which the outer wooden beams are visible and the space between them sometimes filled with richly ornamented plaster. The fireplaces of the wealthy were decorated with carvings, and the roofs were lined with panelled woodwork. Ceilings were of wooden beams ornamented with coats-of-arms or with rosettes and shields.

Many of the larger towns had a noble guild-hall in Gothic style. This was a large room with a vaulted or timbered roof supported on slender pillars, and it had many pointed windows. Here the merchants, clad in their colourful robes,



95. A TOOTHACHE HEAD

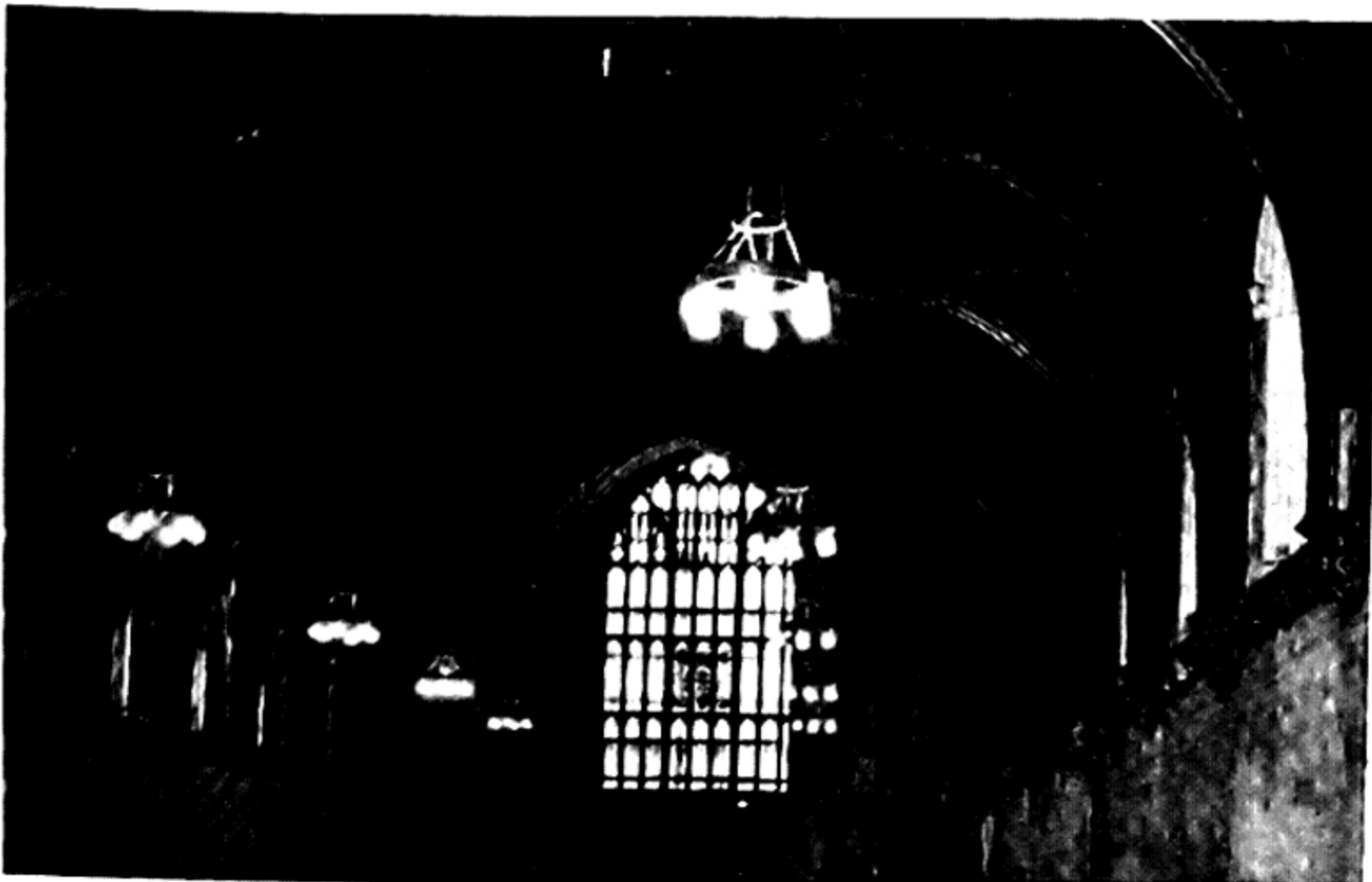
gathered to discuss their trades and make new rules concerning them.

The days when the nobleman built his house like a fortress had gone. Now there were pleasant manor-houses springing up all over the countryside. Although many of them still had a moat and protecting wall around them, they were not meant for defence, but to give a nice effect. In the great halls of these houses the family spent much of its time, and it could not always have been a very comfortable place to lounge in, for many of them had the fire in the middle of the room and the smoke wafted out through a hole in the roof. It must have been a great blessing to them when some one thought of building a wide fireplace against the wall, thus putting an end to smarting eyes!



96. BENCH-END CARVING :
A PIPER

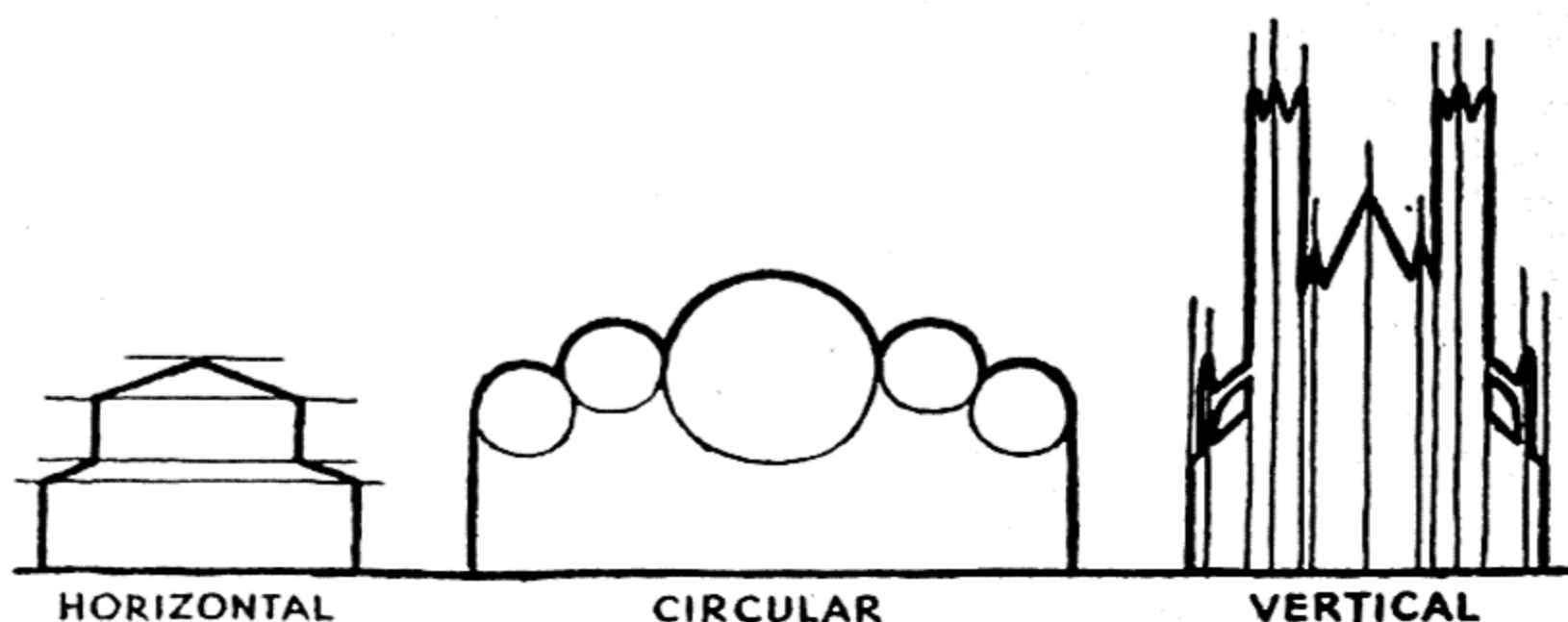
The hall was usually open to the roof—that is, it had no flat ceiling to hide the rafters. But who would wish to hide the lovely work that was put into these old timbered roofs? You can see a magnificent example of such a roof, called a *hammer-beam*, in Westminster Hall.



97. THE HAMMER-BEAM ROOF OF WESTMINSTER HALL

To help you to remember the three styles of architecture we have read about so far—Romanesque, Byzantine, and Gothic—the first should be thought of as being *horizontal* in design ; the second, with its domes, *circular* ; and the third, lofty and pointed, as *vertical*.

Everything in the classical or Romanesque style is symmetrical or balanced. Standing in a Romanesque church, you may see on your right a door about half-way down the length of the building. On the left wall, facing this door, will be another door. One door balances the other. Now, with the Gothic



98. STYLES OF ARCHITECTURE

style, this balance or symmetry should not always be expected. These buildings took such a long time to complete, sometimes hundreds of years, the tasks being handed on from father to son and grandson, each having his own pet ideas on certain points, that it was impossible to prevent some little oddity creeping in here and there. Pillars are sometimes different in design ; you may even see more windows on one side than on the other. Perhaps it is this lack of balance, this oddness, that makes a Gothic church so attractive.

When you are cycling or walking in the country or visiting some of our smaller country towns you may often come upon an old church tucked away from the busy road. You may wonder who built it, when it was built, and in what style it is built. The drawings of windows on the opposite page may help you to identify the style, and even make a rough guess at the date of its construction.

Architecture is history written in stone, and very important history, too, for it shows us all the changes in men's ways of



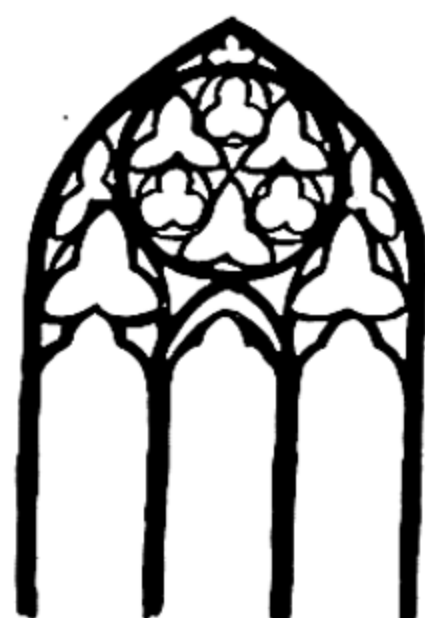
SAXON
600-1066



NORMAN
1066-1200



EARLY ENGLISH
1200-1300



DECORATED
1300-1400



PERPENDICULAR
1400-1550

99. WINDOWS TO LOOK FOR

thinking and living. And if we care to take the trouble we can make a history lesson a fascinating thing by reading what is written in these ancient stones that are scattered over our lovely countryside.



Early English

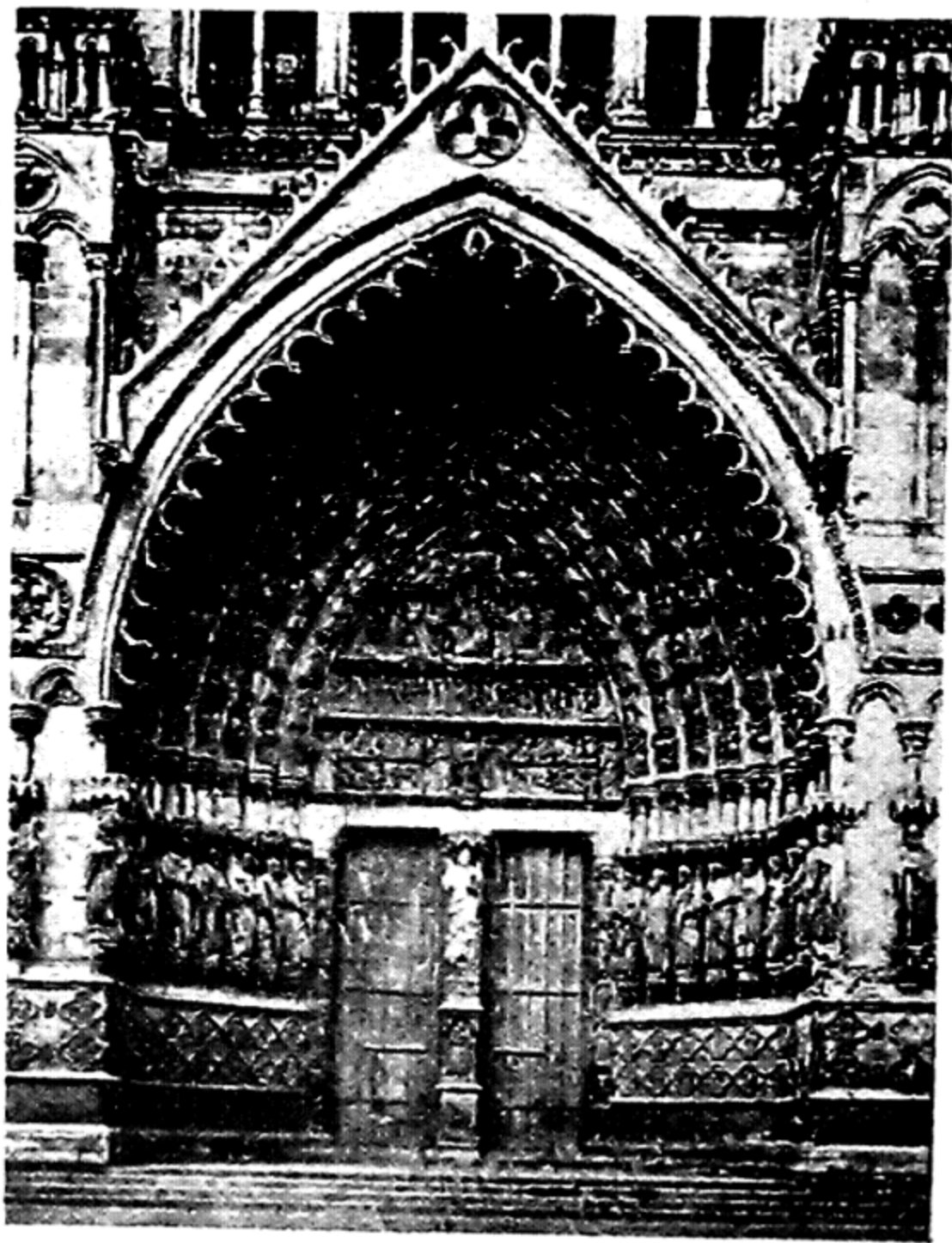


Decorated

100. GOTHIC CAPITALS

9. *The Mediæval Carvers*

SO far we have talked about the carvings of the Gothic churches in a very general way, dealing mainly with the ornaments, such as the dog-tooth and the ball-flower. I think a little more should



101. A DECORATED PORCH OF AMIENS CATHEDRAL

be said about the statues and pictures in stone that helped to make these buildings even more beautiful.

We must go first to France, because France, which gave us Gothic architecture, also led Europe in a revival of sculpture. Her carvers, having studied the works of the ancient masters, once more brought back the art of revealing the structure of the human body beneath the draperies, and created figures that seemed to be alive.

The Gothic sculptor decided that, like the

Greek temple, no church was complete unless it had some sculpture adorning it. There were huge porches simply begging to be filled with figures, and when these and all the other most obvious places were at last occupied by stone saints, then he made hundreds of little niches all over the walls, and these also sheltered a saint or a prophet or an angel. Then the ledges were decorated with figures, all most beautifully carved and looking very much alive.

102. *The Last Judgment* : LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

Amiens Cathedral has hundreds of figures of all shapes and sizes decorating its walls and porches.

It was no use anyone pleading ignorance of Bible stories, for there on the walls, greeting him every time he went to Mass, were his familiar friends the saints and prophets, and carved stories from the Old Testament, scenes from the life of Our Lord and His Blessed Mother and of the saints. Even in that age of faith there were some who weren't as good as they should have been, and to remind them of their duties there were carved pictures of Heaven and Hell and of the Last Judgment.

At *Lincoln Cathedral* there is a carving, dating from 1270-80, of the *Last Judgment* which, in spite of the damaged figures, compares very favourably with the work of the French. Christ as the Judge sits in a quatrefoil frame with angels on one side of Him leading the good souls to Heaven, and on the other side devils carrying off the wicked to eternal punishment. As with all Gothic sculpture, this was once brightly coloured and gleaming with gold. Near the porch over which is set the Last

103. *Queen Margaret (?)* : LINCOLN CATHEDRAL

Judgment is a very beautiful figure, believed to represent *Queen Margaret*, the second wife of Edward I, and it is one of the few surviving examples of English mediæval sculpture at its best.

It was in France that the mediæval sculptor really reached the greatest heights of his craft, and some of his finest work is

seen at Notre-Dame in Paris, and at Chartres, Rheims, and Amiens. Where, for instance, could we find a lovelier statue of the *Virgin and Child* than that which stands over the south porch of Amiens? How human and natural she seems as she holds her Child in her arms and smiles proudly at Him! Later Gothic sculpture is full of this human tenderness and naturalness. In all the work of this period there is freedom of movement, the faces are full of expression and meaning, and the figures stand naturally with clothes that fall into natural folds.

In the latter part of the fourteenth century Claus Sluter, the most famous of the many carvers working in Dijon, produced work that showed great strides towards realism in sculpture. He carved a group of prophets for the fountain in Dijon known as the *Well of Moses*. On the next page is a picture of two of the very realistic and larger-than-life figures, resplendent in gold and colour. Daniel



104. *Virgin and Child*:
AMIENS CATHEDRAL

is the turbaned figure, the other is Isaiah, and both hold long scrolls on which are written words they had spoken in prophecy of the coming death of Our Lord. They look more like actors in a religious play than statues, for there is a great deal of life and character in their faces and dignity in their bearing.

While we are in Burgundy let us take a brief glance at

another branch of sculpture that was quite an important one after the thirteenth century — funeral sculpture. It doesn't sound a very attractive or cheerful subject, but the sculptors brought great feeling and beauty into it. Magnificent tombs were decorated with figures, and among the finest of these sepulchres are those of the Dukes of Burgundy. One that conveys a most intense feeling of grief is that of *Philippe Pot*, where the figures are not merely decorations,



105. SLUTER : *Daniel and Isaiah*



106. THE TOMB OF PHILIPPE POT

Louvre.

but very lifelike images which become living mourners carrying the body on their shoulders.

But Italy, too, was voicing her ideas of what could be done with stone. In Pisa we meet Nicola Pisano (c. 1220–c. 1278), who, after studying not only the works of his ancient countrymen, but also those which France was producing, showed the way his successors were to go. He was one of the greatest workers in marble before Donatello, whom we shall be meeting presently. He brought a truthfulness and naturalness into



107. PANEL FROM NICOLA PISANO'S PULPIT, SIENA CATHEDRAL

sculpture which were not to be seen in Italian painting for nearly a century after his death.

His magnificent pulpit in Siena Cathedral shows how well he advanced towards naturalness. I expect the picture here of one of the panels from the pulpit seems rather confusing, with its medley of figures and animals all crowding against one another. That is because Pisano clung to the old idea of putting several incidents, each of which would make a picture in itself, into one frame, so that each one runs into the other. Yet he has fitted them together so cleverly that we can, with a little thought and care, read the whole story quite easily.

In the bottom left-hand corner is Our Lady presenting her Child to the High Priest Simeon in the temple, in accordance

with the Jewish law of her time. Just behind Simeon is St Joseph being awakened by the angel who warns him to fly to Egypt, so that the Child may escape the murdering hands of Herod. Then immediately we come upon the ass carrying the Blessed Virgin and the Infant Christ into Egypt. So the incidents merge into one another all round the pulpit, telling the story of the life of Our Lord. The limbs of the figures are clearly outlined beneath their garments, which, with their regular and even folds, remind us of the work of the early Romans.

Pisano, combining the style of the ancients with the more naturalistic style of his time, brought new life and spirit into sculpture, and prepared the way that was to lead to the greater works of Michelangelo, Donatello, and many other famous sculptors.

10. *The Road to the Golden Age*

WE now come to the time in our story when we must begin to pay more attention to the names of the artists. There were so many of them at this time that it is difficult to know whom to talk about and whom to leave out. I have tried in the following pages to tell you very briefly about only those who had

something very important to say to those who were to follow them. It is to Italy that we go once more, because, as you will read in the next chapter, it was in that country that a great change came about in the social, political, and religious life of the people which was to affect the whole of Europe, and the builders, sculptors, and painters played quite a large part in that upheaval.



108. MARGARITONE : *Madonna and Child*
National Gallery.

Before we read how artists of the thirteenth century gradually departed from the Byzantine style of painting let us first have a look at a typical Byzantine picture, the *Madonna and Child*, by Margaritone (1236-93). It has the usual gold background, and Our Lady sits very stiffly and awkwardly on her throne. But is she really sitting? She does not seem to be, and there is certainly no lap for her Child to sit on, and Our Lord looks more like a little man than a real chubby baby. The picture lacks life and feeling, and has no depth or space because no attempt has been made to use perspective.

But we cannot really blame Margaritone for this. He could paint only as he had been taught, which was according to the style of the Greeks. It would have been considered very wrong

of him to have made the Blessed Virgin look like an ordinary woman or her Child like a real baby, even had he possessed the skill and knowledge to do so.

During the Middle Ages painting had become just a matter of artists following each other's methods. We have seen how much one Byzantine picture looked like another, although they were all done by different artists. Christ was always depicted as a stern judge ready to punish the wicked, and even as the Loving Shepherd He still looks far from being tender and forgiving. There is no trace of human feeling in His face, no gentleness in that of His mother. They are cold, forbidding creatures. We long for a little warmth in their looks, we seek a smile. But we see only hard, angular figures with bleak looks on their long, narrow faces as they stand before us in their stiffly folded garments. Perhaps I sound rather irreverent, but I am telling you this so that you may understand and appreciate the dramatic change that came about in painting in the thirteenth century. These works of art had served their purpose well, but their day was passing. The Byzantines could not or would not paint figures that looked like real people. They kept their eyes away from the world around them, and saw only visions of the paradise that was to come. Now a more human touch was to come into painting and sculpture. Gradually the flat backgrounds were abandoned, and landscapes, though very simple in form, unreal in appearance, and unskilfully drawn, were to give more naturalism to pictures.

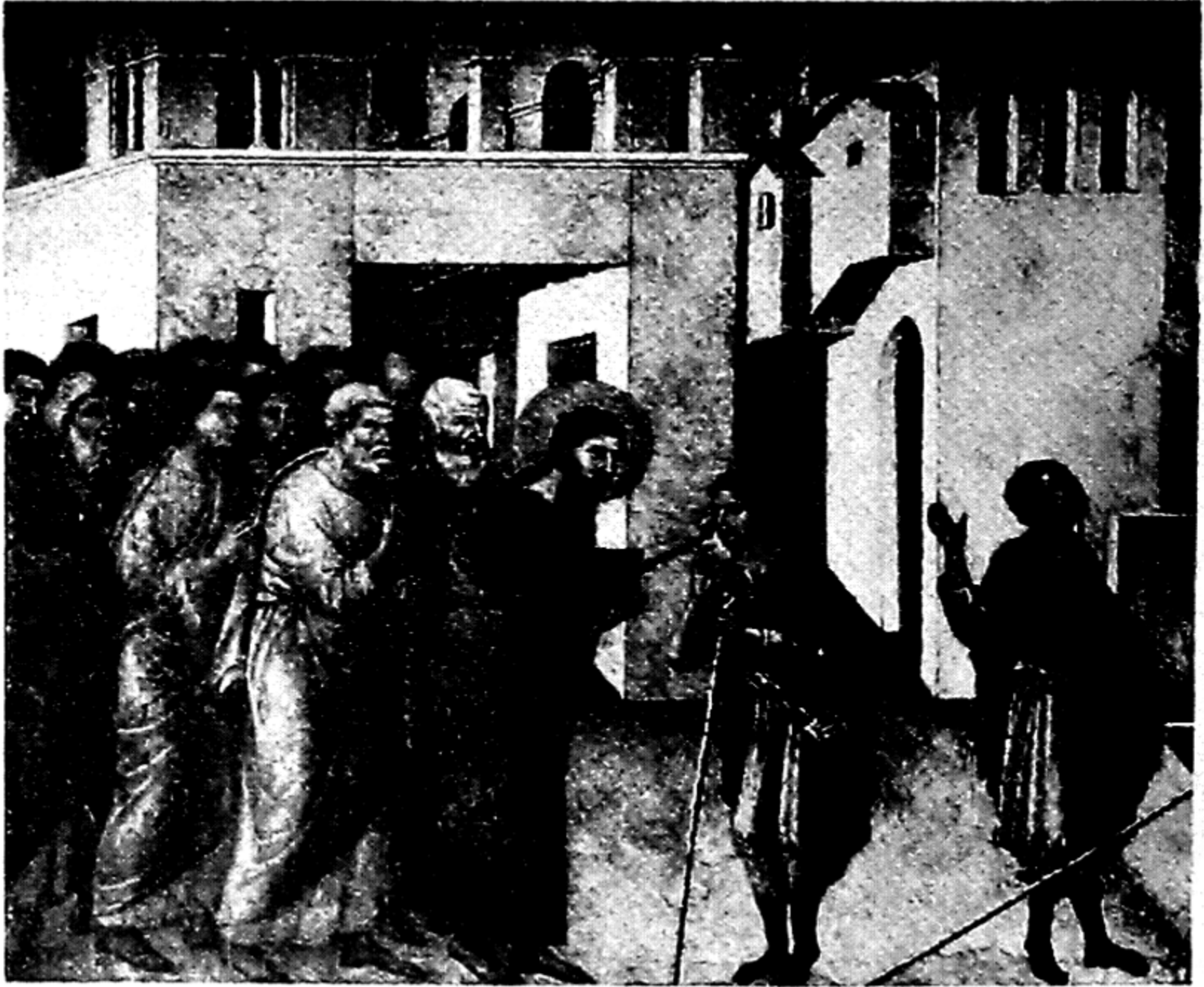
Seeing how light and graceful were the wonderful new churches being erected all over Europe, the painters began to wonder if they could create pictures having all the freedom and beauty that the builders so cleverly used, pictures that would blend with the lofty arches and decorated pillars.

During the latter half of the thirteenth century there lived two Italian painters whose work earned for them a lasting fame in the history of art. Both tried hard to be different from other artists of their day, most of whom, as we know, still painted in the manner of the Byzantines.

The first, Duccio, was born in Siena in 1250. He was very fond of the Byzantine style, which he brought to perfection, and he is known as the last of the great artists who painted in that style. But his work differs quite a lot from that of his fellow-painters, for he gave to his figures a softness that makes

them look more like real human beings. This was the first sign of a new life in painting, and even this early step seemed strange to eyes so long accustomed to the stiff, staring saints of the Byzantine artists. Duccio gave charm, character, and life to the faces of his saints, and their attitudes are natural and full of meaning.

His most famous work was the large altar-piece which he painted for Siena Cathedral between 1308 and 1311. Three



109. DUCCIO : *Christ healing the Blind Man*
National Gallery.

panels of this great work are in the National Gallery. One, *Christ healing the Blind Man*, is shown here.

Gone is the plain gold background. Instead, behind the figures there are houses which, though they look like parts of a toy fort, are signs of new and exciting events in the story of painting. Perspective, too, is used, perhaps a little uncertainly, but we are glad to see it once more after so long an absence from pictures.

You will notice that the picture shows two parts of the story, the first where Our Lord touches the eyes of the blind man, and

the second where, having washed himself in the pool of Siloam (which Duccio has represented as a kind of trough), the cured man raises his eyes to Heaven in thanksgiving and lets his now unwanted stick fall to the ground. A feeling of suspense is created by the anxious looks on the faces of Our Lord's companions as they wonder if the poor man will be cured. The joyful expression of the healed man and the calm authority of Our Lord as He bids him bathe in the pool—so much meaning in expressions, so much movement in the figures, so much



110. GIOTTO : *The Mourning of Christ*

Arena Chapel, Padua.

brightness of colour, so much imagination—are like a glorious sunrise after a long, dark night. The figures may not be very beautiful, and the houses far too small for them to stand up in, but see how well the figures are grouped and how vividly they tell the story. There is as much difference between this picture and a Byzantine one as there is between the latest colour-film and an ordinary photograph.

The second of our two artists was one of the most famous painters who ever lived, a man of genius and courage who showed in his work the spirit of adventure and new thought that was beginning to enter the life of the mediæval world. He used his eyes and painted what he saw—two simple actions that the Byzantines rarely thought about.

Giotto, born in a small village near Florence in 1266, rebelled against the rules and customs of Byzantine painting, and you will see in his picture *The Mourning of Christ* that he went much farther than Duccio. He dresses his figures in garments that have few but very natural folds, and beneath them is a definite indication of a body and limbs. The figures are still very simple and still have the long, narrow eyes of the Byzantine style, but

how full of expression they are! Like Duccio, he has abandoned the gold background, and in most of his pictures the figures stand among hills, trees, and buildings that have the same simple treatment as the figures. Looking at his pictures, we feel that he has painted the incidents just as they might have happened.

Perhaps it is a little difficult for us to see at once how or why Giotto's work so startled the people of his day. To us they still look rather peculiar and unreal, for we never see people quite like them in real life. It is in the movement, the attitudes, the bulk, the solidity, and the arrangement of his figures that we



III. GIOTTO : *Madonna and Child*
Uffizi, Florence.

see something very new in mediæval art. When compared with what had been painted before it becomes easier to understand why they appeared so fresh and so startlingly different. He sometimes put in a figure with its back to us (something never attempted before), and yet, by the poise of the head and shoulders, we know what emotion, such as grief, the figure is expressing. The limbs have movement, hands are raised, a figure stoops, and each one of these gestures tells us something of the story.

If you compare his *Madonna and Child* with that by Margaritone you will see at once how much more natural his figures

are. The background may still seem rather crowded, but there is room for the figures to move about if they wished. Our Lady's face has a more human expression, and was probably painted from a living model. She is obviously sitting quite comfortably on her throne, and her Child looks much more like a real baby. Notice, too, that some attempt has been made to draw the steps of the throne in perspective.

Giotto introduced something else which had not been seen in pictures for nearly a thousand years, and that was *depth*. His people stand firmly in their proper places, with air and space around and between them. You can judge how many feet separate one from another. Giotto was the first of a long line of great Florentine painters, and his title of Father of Modern Painting is well deserved, for he set a pattern which many of those who came after him tried very hard to follow. But none of them equalled him, because, being mere imitators, they only copied his method of painting, and although they did this very well, they could not think and see as he thought and saw. Consequently, not being able to understand his mind, their efforts did not show the skill and vision of the master's work.

Most of Giotto's works were painted on church walls. These wall-paintings are called *frescoes*, which means 'freshly done.' The picture was painted on the damp plaster covering the wall, and both plaster and paint dried together quickly, the paint sinking into the plaster and becoming part of it. Of course, as the plaster dried so quickly, the artist had no time to put in fussy details, and he had to paint very rapidly with broad masses of colour. He also had to be sure that every brush-stroke was correct, because it wasn't easy to alter any mistakes.

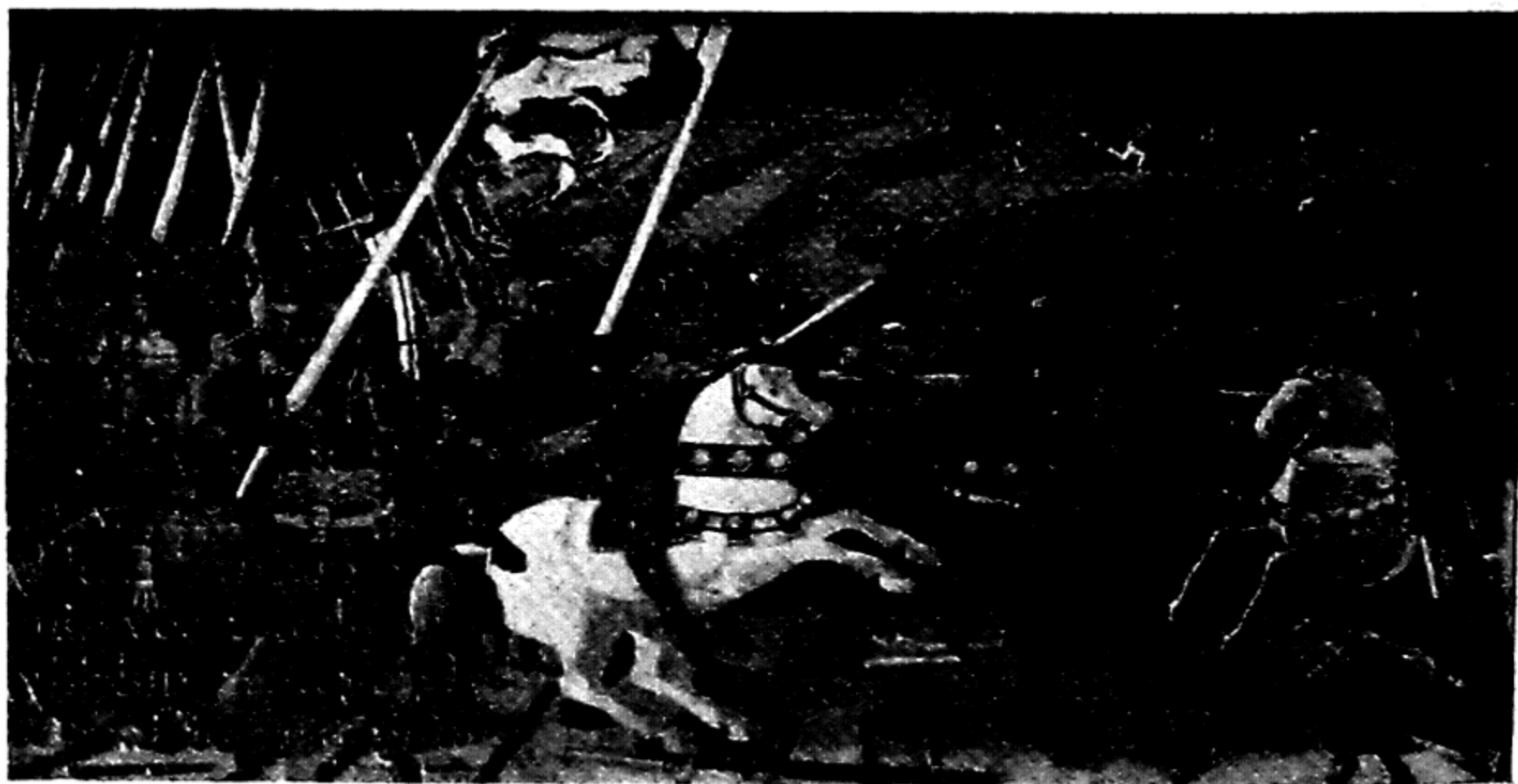
Many famous artists followed Giotto, each having something new to offer for guidance to his successors. Giovanni da Fiesole (1387-1456) was one of the most important of the Florentine artists. He was a very saintly monk, and his beautiful pictures of saints and Madonnas, in which we may see something of his holiness, earned for him after his death the name of Fra Angelico, or Brother Angel.

He too brought something new into Italian painting—soft, gentle landscapes, fresh green meadows, and delicate flowers. His angels look as if they had just flown down from Heaven, but his gentle nature and imagination could never allow him to paint devils that would frighten even a very nervous child. They are

far too genial and pleasant-looking. He painted only religious subjects, showing us vivid and colourful visions of the world to come, where all is brightness and beauty, light and sweetness, just as he saw them in his mind as he worked. One of his pictures will be described in a later chapter.

His pictures are full of light, and have some of the brilliance of a stained-glass window. They were painted in *tempera*, which means distemper-painting. This is done by grinding colours in water and mixing them with the whites of eggs.

Perspective had been a great worry to painters for many years, and no one as yet had completely mastered its difficulties.



112. UCCELLO : *The Rout of San Romano*
National Gallery.

But Paolo Uccello (1397-1475) had a lot to say about it, and he said it in every possible way and on every possible occasion. He called it a delightful thing, and could hardly be dragged away from his painting, so absorbed did he become in the problems of perspective.

His *Rout of San Romano* is a delight to look at, and is a lesson in perseverance. He was not concerned with the story, nor did he try to make the picture realistic in any way. That is why his horses look like rocking-horses, and the unwarlike figures are not quite in true proportions. But we must admire his brave attempts to use perspective properly. The scattered lances, the wounded knights lying on the ground, and even the leaves and

boughs of the trees show how much he loved it. So what does it matter if he used colour in a strange way and painted some of his horses pink or green?

There was no one capable of carrying on where Giotto had left off, and for nearly a hundred and fifty years what he had begun seemed as if it would never be completed, until Masaccio (1401-28) began to paint. Masaccio's name means Clumsy Thomas, but there was nothing clumsy about his work. Before he died at the age of twenty-seven he had become a great painter who brought about a revolution in painting. Uccello struggled with perspective; Fra Angelico appears to have had little difficulty with it; but Masaccio became a master of it.

His work is heavy and solid and has none of the quiet grace of Brother Angel. The figures are like statues, severe and grand, with no gentle curves, and they stand well away from their backgrounds. He had no desire to paint pretty flowers or nice green meadows, but preferred to show his mastery of perspective by placing his figures in large rooms with curving arches and massive pillars. In his picture *The Holy Trinity with the Virgin, St John, and Donor* we look into a large room where the figures stand perfectly still like statues in simple, dignified attitudes. But, because they are so motionless, we are more easily able to feel the silent grief and suffering of the scene. The only movement is that of Our Lady raising her hand towards her Son on the Cross. Masaccio made great efforts towards more realism in painting. He was skilful in arranging his colours and lights



113. MASACCIO: *The Holy Trinity with the Virgin, St John, and Donor*
S. Maria Novella, Florence.



114. FRANCESCA : *The Baptism of Christ*
National Gallery.

further steps towards greater realism. Although he wrote a book about perspective, in this picture he does not quite succeed in using it properly. The hills in the background do not seem very far away, and the trees and bushes on them are as sharp and clear in detail as those near to us, whereas they should have a mistiness and softness of outline that distance always gives to objects.

As well as being one of the finest landscape artists of Europe, Francesca was more than the equal of his fellow-artists as a portrait-painter. The Church had for a long time condemned portraits, saying that they were heathenish and too much like the work of the pagan Greek and Roman artists, but now people

and shades, so that we get a feeling of space and distance and our eyes go immediately to the important characters in the scene.

A great admirer of Masaccio was Piero della Francesca (1416-92), who also made his figures quite simple, sincere, powerful, and noble; but not quite so much like statues as did Masaccio. He reveals in his work a love for fine detail and truthfulness. In his *Baptism of Christ* the reflections on the water and the pebbles on the bed of the stream are little things, beautifully painted, which show even



115. BELLINI : *Leonardo Loredano*
National Gallery

were asking for pictures which had nothing at all to do with religion.

Giovanni and Gentile Bellini were brothers who both surpassed their artist-father, Jacopo, and the younger brother, Giovanni, born in 1430, was the greatest of the three.

He painted many altar-pieces which gained him a great reputation, but it was as a portrait-painter that he became



116. MANTEGNA : *St James on his Way to Execution*
Formerly Eremitani, Padua.

famous. He was very exacting in all his work, truthful in every detail, and used rich colours. I think if we could have met *Leonardo Loredano*, the Doge, or ruler, of Venice, in real life we should have found him a very likable man, ready to smile and listen to us. Perhaps he could have been rather strict and not willing to stand too much nonsense, but there is in those twinkling eyes a suggestion of good humour and gentleness. You see, we have read his character very easily ; and that is what makes this picture one of the greatest portraits in the world. His ability to give us a perfect study of his subject's character,

whatever it might have been, helped to make Giovanni the greatest Venetian painter of the fifteenth century.

When a boy of ten becomes a member of the Paduan Guild of Painters, and at the age of twelve is engaged upon some very important paintings in a large church, you may be sure he is no ordinary boy. Throughout his life Andrea Mantegna (1431-1506) proved that he was no ordinary artist. He was very interested in and influenced by ancient Roman sculpture, and that is why his figures look very much like marble statues. Unfortunately, his *St James on his Way to Execution* was destroyed



117. BOTTICELLI : *Primavera*
Uffizi, Florence.

during the War, but I have chosen to show it because it reminds us, with its curved arch, the sharp perspective, and the statue-like figures, of Masaccio's work. The picture is skilfully divided into two scenes. One, framed by the walls of the arch, shows a guard begging the saint's forgiveness, and the second, on the right, shows a soldier pushing back the crowd of onlookers. But the dividing wall does not distract us. We still see one scene and not two, because we are led from one to the other by a connecting group of figures which grow smaller until they meet the spectators.

A few pages previously I said that during the Middle Ages painting had become just a matter of one artist copying the style of another. Copying, but not being influenced by it, or even

attempting to improve it. But here we have seen how the work of one man, Masaccio, had a great influence on others. They were not merely willing to copy it. They *understood* it, and made use of all he had discovered, and gradually built up their own styles from it and introduced new ideas.

Now we come to a man who was as much a poet at heart as a painter, a man who painted pictures that were either strongly pagan or as strongly religious. Although he too studied Græco-Roman and Roman works, Sandro Botticelli (1444-1510) did not fill his works with the gaiety of the ancients. His gods and goddesses wear rich robes; sparkling jewels adorn the crowns of his Madonnas; his pictures glow with colour and are wonderful in their beauty; but seldom do we see more than a hint of a smile on a face. Only an intense, unearthly beauty and sadness. Towards the end of his life Botticelli repented of his pagan pictures, and, in an



118. BOTTICELLI: *The Magnificat*
Uffizi, Florence.

effort to help to keep alive the Christian spirit that was slowly crumbling throughout Italy, he turned to religious subjects.

Primavera, one of the most famous of his pictures, is a symbolic picture of the coming of Spring. Venus stands in the centre, with Cupid hovering above her. The Three Graces (goddesses who gave to mortals gifts of love, charm, and beauty) stand with Mercury on her right, while on her left gaily decorated Spring, scattering flowers, approaches, accompanied by Flora, the goddess of flowers, and Zephyr, the gentle west wind. The draperies flutter in the breeze, suggesting a gliding movement of these figures, which do not seem to touch the ground, but to float just above it. This picture gives us a good idea of how strong was the revival of pagan art that flourished in Botticelli's time.

In his *Magnificat* Botticelli shows us the other side of his nature, and gives us one of the loveliest of his many Madonnas. Her face is sad and pensive as she seems to gaze beyond the joyful present into the future, when her Son will die a cruel death upon the Cross. She is writing the wonderful words of the Magnificat,

"My soul doth magnify the Lord." The Infant Christ rests in her left arm, and before her an angel holds the inkpot and tablet.



119. TITIAN : *Madonna and Saints with the Pesaro Family*

S. Maria dei Frari, Venice.

The Grand Old Man of Italian art, who died at the age of ninety-nine after painting innumerable pictures both pagan and religious (he wasn't very particular so long as he was painting something), was Titian (1477-1576).

The greatest of Giovanni Bellini's pupils, he found pleasure in the beauty of the human face and figure. As with his master, portraiture, which he brought to a very high level of excellence, revealed his genius. He also painted many altar-pieces and pictures of myths and legends. With him the very last traces of mediæval painting disappeared, and

during his long life he was the most powerful figure in Venetian painting.

All great artists have something new to say, however trifling it may seem, and Titian, in his *Madonna and Saints with the Pesaro Family*, places his main figure, the Virgin, not in the centre, where one would expect it to be, but to the side of the picture. This unheard-of procedure (for those days) draws our attention to her more quickly. With such an arrangement an unskilful artist would have made the picture seem one-sided,

but Titian avoids such a mistake by balancing the figure of Our Lady by a banner carried by an armoured soldier.

His portraits of Popes, statesmen, poets, and kings all tell us a great deal about the subjects' characters, and show us the loneliness, the evil, or the tragedy of their lives. And it is on these portraits, with his clever use of colour and arrangement of lights and shades, that his fame rests.

"The design of Michelangelo and the colouring of Titian." This was the motto lettered on the wall of his studio by Jacopo



120. TINTORETTO : *The Miracle of St Mark*

Accademia, Venice.

Robusti (1518–94), better known as Tintoretto. Look at any of his altar-pieces, historical scenes, legends, portraits, and we shall see how well he lived up to that motto. For a short time he was apprenticed to Titian, and when that great master died Tintoretto was the only artist worthy to step into his place.

He was an impatient and very independent man, preferring his own way in many things, and was not willing to do what every other artist was doing. He tried to be different in every way, and people said his work looked too rough. That was because Tintoretto did not like a perfectly finished painting. Yet, working always with his motto in mind and using his wonderful understanding of light and shade with a skill greater

even than that of Titian, he became one of the greatest of all the masters of the sixteenth century.

He painted hundreds of pictures, some of them very large, and nearly every church in Venice has at least one of them. He filled them with crowds of figures and little incidents which had nothing at all to do with the story, such as dogs fighting and children at play, and in all of them he displays a wealth of imagination, perfect grouping, and a complete mastery of anatomy, colour, and perspective.

The Miracle of St Mark is one of his best-known works. It shows the evangelist, who is the patron saint of Venice, sweeping down from Heaven to rescue a Christian slave from the pagans, who are torturing him, and by a single touch he causes the ropes and chains to fall away from the unfortunate man. We can almost feel the rush of air and hear the swishing of his garments as the saint flies towards the earth, the light radiating from his body falling on the prone figure of the slave, while his shadow darkens the figures in the middle of the group. Behind the gloating torturers the buildings are bathed in a strong light which shows up the dark figures, and the straight lines of the columns and walls give an added emphasis to their movements.

With his death, the golden age of Italian painting came to an end, but it was an end that blazed with glory. The giants were dead, and with them all inspiration seemed to die too. There came after them a collection of clever painters who could only tread in their footprints, and they seemed unable to create anything new. They lacked individuality and original thought, both of which are very necessary for success in any human undertaking, and most of all in the world of art.

We will leave Italy for a while to see what kind of work the painters were doing in other countries, and our first visit will be to the Netherlands, those flat countries far to the north of Italy.

During the Middle Ages the artists of the Netherlands sometimes adopted French and sometimes German ideas of painting, and they did not have any special style of their own until Jan van Eyck (1380-1441) showed them how he thought pictures should be painted. Up to this time painting in every country followed more or less the same rules, until later on Schools of Painting were formed, and these Schools encouraged new ideas, each artist trying to be different from his fellows. We shall be learning more about these Schools in the next chapter.

The work of the Flemish, or Netherlands, painters of the fifteenth century was almost entirely religious in subject. But when they began to experiment and think about things they started to paint portraits and homely pictures of family groups.

One of the world's most famous masterpieces, *The Adoration of the Lamb*, is by Jan van Eyck and his older brother Hubert. We see here how interested were the brothers in beautiful things and in the people they met and saw every day. It is painted in oil-colours. It has been said that Jan invented oil-painting, but we cannot be certain of this claim. If he did not invent it, at least he was one of the first artists ever to use it.



121. HUBERT AND JAN VAN EYCK : *The Adoration of the Lamb* (detail)
Ghent Cathedral.

Full of rich colour and small details perfectly painted and very highly finished, *The Adoration of the Lamb* reminds us of the small pictures in the missals. In spite of all its glory, however, we miss the piety of Giotto and the simplicity of Fra Angelico. The saints, bishops, knights, and judges coming to worship the Holy Lamb are all dressed in glorious garments embroidered with costly jewels and furs. In some of his pictures Jan shows the Blessed Virgin in brightly coloured cloaks and wearing large and heavily jewelled crowns. In another she stands on a tiled floor, and each tile has a picture on it. It would seem that Jan never grew tired of thinking up all kinds of little things which you and I would forget or think unnecessary, and painting them

with a care and faithfulness that astound us. In all his works is a mixture of the worldly and the heavenly, and although we may think that at times Jan lost sight of his story in his ardent love for detail, we realize that it is these details which make his pictures so very human and homely.

A great favourite with visitors to the National Gallery is his *Jan Arnolfini and his Wife*. Once again he shows us how clever he



122. VAN EYCK : *Jan Arnolfini and his Wife*
National Gallery.

was in painting small details, unimportant in themselves, but which become very important indeed under his careful hand. The mirror on the wall fascinates us with its reflections of the room ; the fur on the man's cloak is beautifully painted, and so is the hair of the little dog. The lamp gleams like real brass, and you can see almost every stitch in the patterned carpet. You can spend a whole hour in front of this picture, and each moment you will discover something new to marvel at. In those days rich Flemish merchants liked

to have their portraits painted in homely or business-like surroundings, such as a well-furnished room or a counting-house with bags of money and account-books lying on the table.

The style begun by the van Eycks was followed by all the Flemish artists of the fifteenth century. They became perfect imitators of Nature. Though their work is undoubtedly very beautiful in colour and perfection of detail, not all the artists had learned, as the Italians had, how to arrange and group their figures without making the scene look overcrowded, which, again, is what the artists of the missals did in their pictures.

They were so intent on painting gorgeous stuffs and cloths, jewels and furniture in which even the grain of the wood and every nail is faithfully drawn, that they forgot all about giving their figures a natural and elegant pose.

The first of the Flemish artists to break away from the style of van Eyck was Hans Memlinc (1430-94), one of the most delightful and most appealing painters of the fifteenth century.

His work has not the vigour of van Eyck's, but it has a great tenderness and charm as well as brilliant colour. His favourite subject was the Madonna and Child, and Our Lady always looks very sweet and gentle, and is usually surrounded by lovely angels. In the backgrounds we see glimpses of fresh green meadows and trees, or a quaint little town, miniature scenes perfect in every detail.



123. MEMLINC : *St Ursula meets the Pope*
Detail from *The Shrine of St Ursula*

St John's Hospital, Bruges.

In the Hospital of St John in Bruges is one of the art wonders of the world, his *Shrine of St Ursula*, painted on the sides of a long casket which was made to hold holy relics. We see the saint on her way to Rome, accompanied by eleven hundred girl companions. In Rome she meets the Pope, and, on returning to Cologne, the unfortunate lady and her followers are killed by the Huns. The calmness with which the saint and her friends face the arrows of their murderers may seem a little too incredible. They show no alarm, dismay, or even surprise, but accept their deaths as if it didn't matter a thing to them. They seem to be acting in a play or living in a dream. Surely this must be the

most gentle martyrdom ever painted ! I like to think that Hans showed some kind consideration for our feelings, for he stops his story just when the archer is about to send his arrow into St Ursula's body.

The figures are thoughtfully grouped against their backgrounds of ships and palaces, and the colouring is delightful. But, although the scenes all make a very pretty picture, the lack of tragedy in it robs it of any force, and we are left feeling that the story is not quite true.

Flemish painting in the fifteenth century was perfect in its



124. BREUGHEL : *Wedding Feast*
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

workmanship, but the artists were too fond of putting too much detail into it, leaving little to our imaginations. Michelangelo said of Flemish painting of this time ". . . it tried to do so many things at once (each alone would suffice for a great work) so that it does not do anything really well." A harsh criticism, perhaps, but I do not think we can entirely disagree with it.

Our next artist is one whose work was vastly different from that of both van Eyck and Memlinc. Of course, as he was born a hundred years later than Memlinc, we should expect to see changes that were sure to come about in such a long space of time.

Pieter Breughel the Elder (1525-69) painted a few religious pictures, but he found his greatest pleasure in picturing scenes

from rural life, such as village wedding feasts, villagers merry-making, and country dances. He never tried to make his people more handsome than they really were. His characters are gross and ugly, but they are very human people who do very human things. He enjoyed their company, and he has passed on his enjoyment to us. We share his laughter and his love of Nature. In his works we see not only beautiful landscapes, lovely old houses, trees, and brilliant colour and humour, but also serious comment and thought about the world in which he lived. He points out to us how stupid we look and how stupidly we act in certain circumstances. He makes fun of pride and scorns flattery. He forsook religious pictures to show life as it was lived in his time.

It is a pity I cannot show his *Wedding Feast* in colour, for colour is the life of Breughel's paintings. What a busy scene it is! It is full of human incident. See how the musician stops playing his bagpipes to gaze hungrily at the cakes being carried in by two servants. Each guest is having his fill of good food, and one small child in the foreground, wearing a hat far too big for him, is eating as fast as he can. There is movement everywhere, and you can well imagine the din of chatter and the noise of clinking plates.

We now go to Germany, where we meet Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), who was the greatest of the German artists. He is better known for his wood-engravings and etchings on copper than for his paintings, which are rather harsh in colour and have little of the charm, careful design, or balance of the Italian masters. There is not much beauty in them, and it was this lack of beauty



125. DÜRER : *St Michael fighting the Dragon*.
British Museum.

which prevented him from becoming one of the greatest artists of his time.

Although he went to Italy for a while and became a very ardent admirer of the work of Giovanni Bellini, he never succeeded in his efforts to mix his own typically German style with that of the Italians. Nearly all his pictures are religious in subject and have a rather gloomy air about them. Among his most well-known are a number of wood-cuts illustrating the *Apocalypse*, the Revelation of St John. As you know, this is the last book in the New Testament, and in Chapter Twelve we read that a war took place in Heaven between Michael and his angels and the dragon, which was the devil, and his hordes of wicked angels. St Michael looks very grim as, with both hands, he thrusts his spear into the writhing dragon. It is a very crowded sky, and it is difficult to distinguish angels from dragons, but the sense of movement and strife conveyed by the snarling beasts and the beating wings is powerful and convincing. Below them lies the quiet countryside, with peaceful wooded hills and church spires, all unaware of the terrific struggle going on in the sky above it.

Dürer was a deeply religious man, and the general discontent with the Church at that time is shown in his works, which were considered as prophetic warnings of the terrible punishments that were to come upon the world because the Church was so bad. But we can forget his gloominess when we see his delightful studies of flowers, plants, and animals, which are among his most charming works. He probably felt much happier when he was drawing these and forgetting the troubles of the world.

Germany has never had many really great artists, and whatever talent existed during the sixteenth century was crushed by the Reformation. The reformed Church said it was idolatrous to have statues and pictures in churches, so the artists lost their chief buyer of pictures, and they were faced with a very serious problem. They could, of course, go on painting portraits, but even this demand would have to end some day. The disturbances and wars caused by the Reformation drove many people to wandering over Europe seeking peace and liberty to think, worship, and work as they wished. One of these wanderers was the German painter Hans Holbein (1497-1543), who came to England, where he painted many portraits, notably

those of that much-married monarch Henry VIII (to whom he became Court Painter) and some of his unlucky wives.

Windsor Castle has more than eighty of his drawings of the famous and infamous people who lived during the reign of Henry VIII. Because, like Breughel, he always drew and painted what he saw with truth and with no attempt to flatter, we can be sure that these portraits were exact likenesses of their subjects. In his finest portrait-painting, *The Duchess of Milan*, he shows us a fifteen-year-old girl of great beauty in her close-fitting cap and black widow's dress (she was married at the age of eleven). With her serene face and pale hands standing out boldly against her dark clothes, it is a simple, unforgettable picture of a young girl full of life, intelligence, and confidence, gazing at us with a hint of a smile in her eyes. It was painted at the request of Henry VIII, who wanted to marry her. But she was a very wise young lady. She replied to his offer that if she had two heads she would be only too happy to leave one at his disposal, but, having only one, she very regretfully refused his proposal.

Holbein preferred to show us the character of his subject, rather than let us be distracted by ornate mirrors, wonderful dresses, bowls of fruit, and finely patterned carpets. In van Eyck's *Jan Arnolfini and his Wife* we spend a great deal of time peering into the room looking for all the fascinating details, and poor Jan and his wife receive very little of our attention. The little Duchess of Milan, on the other hand, stands against her plain blue background, and there is nothing else to draw our eyes away from her.

Hans Holbein is almost the last of the great portrait-painters



126. HOLBEIN: *The Duchess of Milan*
National Gallery.

in the world, and, like so many famous artists, he had a train of imitators. But none proved his equal. For two hundred years after his death art in England hardly had one great name to support it.

Now a Greek with the awkward name of Theotocopoulos comes on the scene. He was called El Greco (the Greek).

In Crete, where he was born in 1545, he was used to seeing the usual Byzantine type of picture, but after a visit to Venice,



127. EL GRECO: *The Burial of Count Orgaz*
Santo Tomé, Toledo.

where he worked for a time with Titian and became as great a lover of colour as the Venetians, he decided that sacred stories could and should be told in a different manner. He went to another country, Spain, where, as in Greece, mediæval ideas of painting were still the fashion. It was in Toledo that he painted pictures that were strange and stirring. He completely ignored all the laws and rules of drawing figures, and used colour in a startling way.

In *The Burial of Count Orgaz* you will notice that some of his figures are very long and narrow, with long, narrow faces, revealing how strongly the Byzantine style of his native country had become mingled with his ideas of Italian art. The lower part is quite realistic, indicating that he had not forgotten what he had learned in Italy, but the upper portion is very different in its treatment. It is unreal, with its long and rather distorted figures full of restless movement. To appreciate El Greco's work fully it should be seen in colour, which, with its wonderful effects of strong light and shade, makes his pictures seem so

modern and fresh in thought and treatment. There is nothing tender or gentle in them. They may seem brutal and harsh to us, they may thrill us or make us shudder, but they are filled with deep spiritual thought and meaning, revealing the devout religious nature of the artist.

Spain, more than any other country in Europe in the sixteenth century, was filled with a religious fervour, and no doubt this had a great effect upon El Greco, a mystic who saw his visions in unusual colours. He maintained that colour was more important than drawing, a belief that is shown in all his work.

Our brief trip into the other countries of Europe must stop here for a while, because I want to tell you about three of the most famous artists who ever lived. They are so important in our history that they and the times in which they lived deserve a separate chapter.

II. *The Giants of the Renaissance*

IN the beginning of the previous chapter I said that a great upheaval came about in Europe in the fifteenth century which affected the lives of the people in many ways. That upheaval was called the Renaissance. Renaissance means rebirth or revival, and the rebirth of Europe was one of the most remarkable events in its history. To find out what effects it had upon sculpture, painting, and architecture we must return to Italy, for it was in that country that the Renaissance really began.

For a long time Rome had been the centre of civilization, but after the Goths and Vandals (from which we get the word *vandalism*, which means the deliberate spoiling or destruction of works of art) had invaded her in the fourth century the might of the Roman Empire was broken. The Italians, however, never forgot the past glories of their country, and the idea of a revival of its former splendour was always in their minds.

In 1453 Constantinople, the capital of the eastern half of the empire, fell to the Turks, and its downfall made many Greek-speaking scholars who had lived there homeless. They wandered westward until they arrived in Italy, bringing with them manuscripts of ancient Greek literature, works which had been almost forgotten in Western Europe during the Middle Ages. The people of Italy became interested in what these scholars told them about these books and the works of the ancient Greeks, and they began to study the arts of the ancient world themselves. That, very briefly, is how the Renaissance began.

It was a gradual growth, and the signs of its approach had been visible to wise and far-seeing men for many years. For a long time people all over Europe had been increasing their knowledge as universities were built, towns grew up, and trade developed. Nor did the Renaissance end abruptly like a blind drawn across a lighted window. It faded slowly, lingering into the early eighteenth century.

During this wonderful, colourful age Henry VIII ruled in England, followed by Edward VI, Mary Tudor, and Elizabeth I. St Thomas More, Chancellor to Henry VIII, was executed for

so-called treason ; Drake roamed the seas, making a nuisance of himself to the Spaniards ; Shakespeare wrote his plays. Elsewhere, Luther and Calvin were upsetting the religious life of the people with their defiance of the Church. At the beginning of this revival Columbus and Vasco da Gama made their voyages of discovery. It was an age of wars, of cruelty, adventure, of a return to paganism. But it was also a golden age wherein flourished the genius of a host of artists, scholars, and poets who devoted their talents and their lives to spreading the "new learning." It was an age of giants.

In the new prosperity Europe was now enjoying the merchants, helped by their increasing wealth, climbed into the seats of power and became rulers of their native or adopted cities. The Church, weakened by heresies, lost her hold over these men, who no longer accepted her authority as a teacher, but argued and asked questions, challenged and inquired. Their rule of living became a get-rich-quick-while-you-can one, and they had no mind to rely upon the promised happiness of the next world when it was so easy to make and enjoy riches in this one. Life was changing with every new discovery, with every new thought.

During these troublous times there were men in Italy who were achieving a fame that has lasted to this day. They were the giants of the Renaissance. Never since the days of the ancient Greeks had there been so many great artists born in so short a space of time. To read about the Renaissance is to get the impression that during that period Europe must have been one vast studio, with hundreds of artists all carving and painting unceasingly, creating the most stupendous works of art ever seen by man.

They tried different ways of painting, maintaining, and rightly too, that you cannot have progress without experimenting. They discovered a new love for classical sculpture, and as they studied these works of the old Greek masters they realized how much better than themselves were these artists of pagan times.

For many ages artists had been content to paint religious pictures for churches, but now, in their new-found freedom of thought, they chose to paint pictures not of saints, but of myths, stories, and legends of the old Greek and Roman gods. These subjects offered much more scope for the imagination. So we see that in her hunger for more and more knowledge and more

freedom in art Italy forgot the simple piety of the Middle Ages and returned to the ways of thought of the pagans. Artists had once been proud and humble enough to honour and glorify God in their work. Now they painted and carved for the honour and glory of men.

The Church was no longer the only buyer of works of art. The rich merchants and the princes also wanted to adorn their villas and palaces with pictures and statues. When he built a hospital or a church the rich merchant sometimes employed an artist to mark the occasion by painting a picture, usually a religious one.

A favourite theme was that of Our Lady with her Child and a few saints, with, in the foreground, the merchant who had donated, or given, the building to the town kneeling with his family before her, all in a most pious attitude with hands clasped in prayer and eyes raised to heaven. One cannot help thinking that, in spite of their religious atmosphere, these 'donor' pictures were nothing more than flattering monuments to the merchants in return for their good deeds.

The luxury in which the wealthy people lived had an effect upon painting which made the pictures of bygone days seem very simple and plain indeed. To help you to understand how rapidly ideas had changed in painting in such a short time as thirty years let us look at two pictures of the same subject painted by two different artists (Nos. 128, 129). It is called *The Annunciation*, and it tells the story of Our Lady receiving the news that she is to become the mother of Our Lord.

Our first picture is by Fra Angelico, who died at the beginning of the Renaissance. It is one of the simplest masterpieces ever painted. The brightly winged angel, clad in a plain pink robe, greets the Blessed Virgin, who humbly folds her hands across her breast and listens attentively and wonderingly to his words. Our Lady, too, is dressed quite simply in a pink dress and a dark-blue cloak. She is seated on a low stool, an article of furniture more often seen in the houses of the poor than in the homes of the rich. Fra Angelico shows her taking her ease in the shade of what seems to be a small cloister, or loggia, such as may still be seen in some Italian houses to-day. In order, therefore, that people should 'feel at home' with the picture, the artist has set her in this homely place which was familiar to them, indicating quite clearly that she was just an ordinary

housewife, like any of his day. The garden is merely a grass-covered courtyard with a sprinkling of flowers and a wooden fence round it. Everything in the picture tells us over and over again that Our Lady was a simple girl who lived a simple life. Yet, with all this simplicity, we feel a little of the awe she must have known at that great moment. It is a story told devoutly and sincerely by a man who believed it with all his heart and soul.

Now compare this picture with that painted by Carlo



128. FRA ANGELICO : *The Annunciation*
S. Marco, Florence.

Crivelli in 1486, just thirty years after the Renaissance had begun. It is a great work which gives much pleasure when you study it, because it is so beautifully coloured and enchants us with its details. Yet, with all its many undoubted merits, it lacks something very important. Though the story is true, it is not told truthfully. There is no meekness here, no hint of poverty, none of the simplicity of Fra Angelico. It is a great show of richness and splendour, a beautiful picture beautifully painted, and there is not much more we can say for it.

Our Lady, judging by her dress, must be the wife of a nobleman, for she does not look at all poor, as she really was. She kneels in a splendidly furnished room with a richly ornate ceiling. A red curtain embroidered with gold is drawn back

to reveal a panelled wall. The outside of the house is ornamented with carvings and figures, a carpet hangs from a balcony, and a gorgeous peacock droops his tail, which points to the kneeling figure. The angel Gabriel, accompanied by a bishop, wears robes of brocade and silk and kneels in a marble-paved avenue.



129. CRIVELLI : *The Annunciation*
National Gallery.

It is a picture all gold and bright colours, depicting wealth and luxury entirely out of keeping with the story it tells.

The jars of preserve on the shelf and the books and the rich cover on the bed all reveal the love for the good things of life of which the Renaissance noblemen, and the Church too, were so fond, and no doubt this picture pleased them immensely. It shows at once how tastes had changed. The painters were not interested so much in keeping alive the teachings of Christianity as

in trying to portray the splendour of the age in which they lived.

In all their pictures the artists strived for the utmost beauty in both figures and landscape, and, of course, they brought into them some of the lovely Italian countryside, which is among the most beautiful in the world. Palaces and church-towers, little towns perched on hill-tops, orange-groves, sparkling streams, craggy mountains—you will see them all minutely and exquisitely painted behind a Madonna kneeling in a field adoring her Child, or a holy hermit meditating outside his cave. In a larger picture with many figures, such as the Nativity, they broke away entirely from the usual setting of the scene, and the

humble stable becomes a nobleman's palace with marble pillars and a gilded ceiling.

Italy, during the revival of learning, was divided into provinces, each ruled by a man who tried to make his Court more brilliant than those of his neighbours by offering wealth to famous artists and scholars to come and live and work in his city.

These gatherings of artists in groups all over the country were known as Schools of Painting. They were not the kind of schools you and I know, where we go to learn geography, arithmetic, and history. Neither did they really teach painting. They were called Schools because the men who belonged to them shared similar ideas about painting and sculpture.

Many of the greater artists had assistants, called apprentices, whom they trained to copy their ways of painting. These young boys ground and mixed the colours (you couldn't buy boxes of paints in those days ; you had to make your own as they were needed), and, if they were clever enough, were allowed to paint the less important parts of their master's pictures. Each of these Schools had different ideas and methods of painting, and each achieved its fame in different ways.

The Florentine School was the greatest of them all, and its work inspired all the others throughout Italy. Its only dangerous rival was the Venetian, which was the first to use the new technique of oil-painting. The Paduan and Umbrian Schools also left their mark on the history of Italian painting, while the Sienese, after a brief glory, passed away because, unlike its rivals, it did not turn to Nature for its inspiration, but clung to the old mediæval styles. There were many other Schools, among them the Tuscan, Lombard, Roman, and Bolognese, to name only a few, all of which followed their own paths to fame.

And now, after all this lengthy introduction, we come at last to the three men I want to tell you about. When people talk of the Renaissance the names of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael are often mentioned, because these three artists were the most famous of their time. The first two belonged to the Florentine School, the third to the Umbrian, and each served a time as an apprentice.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) had gifts and imagination which raised him far above his fellow-men even in that age of

genius. With his many talents, he was one of the most remarkable men who ever lived.

At the age of eighteen he entered the studio of Andrea del Verrocchio (of whom we shall be reading more later), where he received a thorough training in sculpture and painting, and soon proved he was cleverer than his fellow-pupils. When Verrocchio was once too busy to finish his picture *St John baptizing Christ* he asked Leonardo to complete it by painting one of the angels. The master was astonished when he saw his pupil's work, for the beauty of the angel surpassed that of all the other figures in the picture. It is said that Verrocchio, disheartened that a boy so young should be able to paint better than he, a much older and more experienced man, never again took up a brush, but devoted the rest of his life to sculpture.

Leonardo did not paint many pictures during his long life, because he so often became so absorbed in solving all kinds of problems that puzzled his hungry mind that he seldom finished what he began. When he was in Rome the Pope said of him, "This man will never do anything. He thinks of the end before the beginning!" He was more interested in learning how things were done than in doing them. Even as a schoolboy he drove his masters to despair, for he began to learn many things and then gave them up. Many of us are like that, but we haven't the brain of a Leonardo to help us to make up for lost opportunities.

As well as being a painter, he was a sculptor, architect, writer, composer of music, poet, engineer, chemist, athlete (he excelled in long and high jumps), and in his spare time a maker and player of musical instruments. He was very strong and able to bend a horseshoe between his fingers. He was a tireless, energetic man who could, when he needed to or felt like it, work in his studio for twenty hours a day without pausing for food or drink.

While he was painting his most famous picture, *The Last Supper*, he would sometimes spend a whole day just gazing at and criticizing what he had done so far. At the same time he was working on the largest equestrian statue (a statue of a horse and rider) that the world had ever seen. At least, it would have been, had he finished it! He would suddenly leave this to work upon some new idea that was occupying his agile mind—a means of walking on water, a paddle-steamer (long before

steamships were ever thought of!), a new type of gun, an automatic drill, a lift, a flying-machine (which, had it been built, would have flown), a submarine, a tank, or to settle a problem in mathematics or geometry. So you can see now why his paintings are so few.

Always seeking new ways of painting, Leonardo painted *The Last Supper* in tempera, but, instead of using the usual medium, the whites of eggs, he invented one of his own and kept the secret to himself. Less than fifty years after it was



130. DA VINCI : *The Last Supper*
S. Maria delle Grazie, Milan.

finished decay set in, the paint became a mass of mildew, and the picture, which was painted on a wall, became almost invisible. It was not until 1908 that his secret process was discovered, and one of the world's greatest pictures was saved from utter ruin, although too late for us to see it in its original brilliance and freshness.

It must have been a very awe-inspiring sight when newly painted. To the monks who sat in the refectory or dining-hall of the monastery in which the picture was painted it appeared as if another hall had been added to it in which at another long table sat Christ with His apostles, sharing the humble meal of the monks. You can see not only in their faces, but also in their attitudes, the dismay among His followers as Our Lord says, "Verily I say unto you, one of you shall betray Me!" And Judas, clasping his bag of money, shows his nervousness by upsetting the salt as he snatches his hand away from the dish. I

do not think that any artist before or since has presented this scene with so much drama and feeling.

One of the masterpieces of European art is Leonardo's *The Virgin of the Rocks*. The figures, grouped in a gloomy cavern, are touched by a ray of light which pierces the darkness. The



131. DA VINCI: *The Virgin of the Rocks*
National Gallery.

angel on the right is said to be one of the loveliest in Italian painting. Our Lady has one arm about the infant St John, and she holds up her other hand for silence while her Child gives His blessing. It is difficult to believe when you first see this picture that the figures have not been created by the mysterious light itself. Such an other-worldly effect surely could not have been achieved by such ordinary things as brush and paint!

Leonardo is considered to have been more a scientist and an engineer than an artist. Such a man, with a mind that flitted from

problem to problem, who seldom settled down to complete a task, and yet was hailed as a genius in his lifetime, must have had rare gifts indeed.

With Michelangelo (1475-1564), the greatest artist of all time, the case is different. Here we have a man whose work, and there is plenty of it, has been praised, admired, and almost worshipped for more than four hundred years.

While in Rome during 1497 he began his famous *Pietà*. It shows the Virgin with the dead Christ in her lap. It is a very moving work, and Our Lady's face wears an expression of grief

that is not only very beautiful, but has the power of making us feel that the event of Our Lord's body being taken down from the Cross has only just happened. The body of her Son reveals Michelangelo's amazing knowledge of the construction of the human figure.

During a later visit to Rome he was asked by Pope Julius II to build a tomb for him which was to be a memorial to himself, the most splendid in the world. Filled with enthusiasm and great plans, Michelangelo spent many months selecting the marble for this great work, paying for it all out of his own purse. Then disaster came. Bramante, the architect in charge of the building of the new St Peter's Church in Rome, was jealous of the Florentine's skill, and, wishing to prevent his becoming too great a favourite with the Pope, told the latter that to have his tomb erected before his death was about the most unwise and unlucky thing a man could do. So the Pope changed his mind, and Michelangelo had to give up all his grand schemes. One of the few figures carved before work on the tomb was stopped is that of *Moses*, one of the most powerful pieces of sculpture in the world.



132. MICHELANGELO : *Pietà*
St Peter's, Rome.

Michelangelo was a sculptor who found himself forced to become a painter when the Pope ordered him to decorate the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. Once again Bramante had interfered. He knew perfectly well that Michelangelo was a sculptor and not a painter, and he urged the Pontiff to give this tremendous task to the Florentine, hoping that Michelangelo would fail miserably and bring discredit upon himself. The sculptor hated the thought of painting, and

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begged the Pope to give the task to Raphael. But a Pope's command could not so easily be evaded, and he insisted that his orders be carried out, softening his demand by telling Michelangelo that he could paint whatever Biblical subjects he liked.



133. MICHELANGELO : *Moses*
S. Pietro in Vincoli, Rome.

At first Michelangelo had other artists to help him, but he did not like their work. He sent them away, destroyed what they had done, and began all over again by himself. And every day for five long years he climbed the high scaffolding and lay on his back painting the ceiling, covering it with three hundred and fifty figures in scenes from the old Testament.

To show a picture of the whole ceiling on a page this size would be useless, as no detail would be clearly seen. Here we have one incident, *The Creation of Adam*. God, his robes billowing in the wind, sweeps down to earth, about to touch the outstretched hand of Adam,



134. MICHELANGELO : *The Creation of Adam*
Vatican

to give life to the first man. Adam seems as if he had been asleep for a long time and has just awakened at this moment, a moment he has been waiting for for so long.

The garments of God are dark in colour, and Adam lies on a dark ground. Between these two dark tones is a lighter one which draws our eyes to the two hands, the main part of the picture. One hand is limp and lifeless, the other, with finger outstretched, seems full of energy and terrific power. We wait for the moment when the two hands will meet and Adam get up and move about.

Raphael, when he saw the completed ceiling, said that he thanked God he had been born in the same century as Michelangelo. Even his enemy Bramante admitted that it far surpassed anything he had ever seen.

Michelangelo was not very interested in depicting Nature, such as trees and meadows, nor did he spend much time on splendid costumes, and he paid scant attention to the effects of light and shade. He devoted his genius to the painting of the human figure in very energetic action, very muscular and statuesque, and at times in attitudes impossible for any human being to adopt.

After Bramante's death Michelangelo was made chief architect of St Peter's, a task he gladly undertook without payment and "for nothing but the honour and glory of God." Although Bramante had been his enemy for years, Michelangelo was noble enough to insist that Bramante's plans should be completed, and would have no interference with them. A generous gesture indeed, which only a man with an unselfish spirit such as Michelangelo possessed could make. He designed the



135. PERUGINO : *Madonna Enthroned*
Vatican.

dome of St Peter's, and it is recognized all over the world to-day as a symbol of the Eternal City and of a Faith that has lasted for nearly two thousand years.

Working up to within two days of his death at the age of nearly ninety, he has left behind him works in marble and paint that have never been surpassed. His greatness lay in his dissatisfaction with himself and his work. He once said, "Trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle," and he probably understood the meaning of perfection better than any other man.

Both he and Leonardo knew what it was to have to deal with difficult people, to have many disappointments, and to see their best schemes spoiled by the petty jealousies and spite of their enemies. It is not often that genius finds an easy road to fame, but with Raphael (1483-1520) it seems that he was successful from the very start of his career.

He was born in Urbino, and at the age of sixteen was apprenticed to the painter Perugino. Their friendship was a happy one, and in his earlier works Raphael shows the strong influence of his master's style upon him. When he began to



136. RAPHAEL : *The Ansidei Madonna*
National Gallery.

paint under his own name in 1500 he, like his master, specialized in pictures of the Madonna, and many of them could easily be mistaken for the work of Perugino. In the *Ansidei Madonna* there is a strong likeness to Perugino's *Madonna Enthroned* (p.125). If you compare these two pictures you will see the points of similarity for yourself. But, although he so closely imitated his master, Raphael manages to convey a greater feeling of space and movement.

He too was asked by Pope Julius II to paint pictures on the walls and

ceilings of several rooms in the Vatican. These paintings, of which one, *The Liberation of St Peter from Prison*, is shown here, are all perfect in design and balance, and have none of the rather sentimental sweetness of his Madonnas. Here at last he speaks with his own voice, and not that of his teacher. It is full of a vigour, life, and rapid movement such as Perugino could never have portrayed.

In the last years of his life his work sank to a very low level of quality, because too much of it was left to the unskilled hands of his apprentices. On his thirty-seventh birthday, Good Friday, 1520, he died, and was buried in the Pantheon in Rome.

Now it is time to see what the sculptors and architects had been doing during this wonderful period in the history of art.



137. RAPHAEL : *The Liberation of St Peter from Prison*
Vatican.

12. *Some Sculptors of the Renaissance*

AS well as leading Europe in the revival of painting, Italy had also the greatest sculptors, of whom, as we know, Michelangelo was the most outstanding. But before his time there were many other brilliant carvers, and of them there were three whom we cannot ignore, because their work was so excellent, and a short chapter about them is necessary before we close the story of the artists of the Renaissance.

Once more we go back to the fifteenth century to meet the first of them, the Florentine Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378–1455), the greatest worker in bronze of his century. His most famous work, which took him a great part of his life to complete, is the two sets of bronze doors for the Baptistery of Florence Cathedral. When Michelangelo saw the second set he said they were fit to be the gates of Paradise. The first set tells, in twenty panels modelled in high- and low-reliefs, the life of Christ, and the second has ten panels showing incidents from the Old Testament.

It is interesting, when you recall how once upon a time



138. GHIBERTI : *Adoration of the Magi*
A panel from the north doors of the Baptistery,
Florence.

painters made their figures look like statues, to see how Ghiberti, using perspective in his sculptures in a way one usually sees only in pictures, makes his scenes look like paintings in bronze. Even the backgrounds to the figures are like those in pictures of that time, depicting classical buildings with round Roman arches and pillars. He has given a tremendous feeling of depth by modelling his figures in the foreground very deeply, almost in the

round, while those farther away are in quite low-relief. In some panels there are more than a hundred figures, each one a work of remarkable skill, full of grace and life, having an individual character and a definite part to play, and the flowing draperies give them a great deal of movement.

They are far different from the statues of the Gothic era, because, as he tried to imitate Nature so closely, he has got much nearer to the realism of the Roman sculptors ; but he used perspective much more cleverly than they.

Living at the same time as Ghiberti was Donatello (1386-1466). He too was a Florentine, and his is one of the foremost names in Italian sculpture. All his life his strong love of ancient classical art had a great effect on his work. He was really the first artist to bring complete realism into sculpture, such as is seen in his *David*, who looks more like a young athlete waiting to take part in some contest than the shepherd-boy of the Biblical story who slew the giant Goliath with a sling and stone. Yet in his attitude there is a confidence which leads us to expect anything from such a beautiful and well-proportioned youth. It is a statue that is classical in every way, in pose, execution, and character, full of youthful life and vigour.

You will see that it is carved in the round. Donatello was the first sculptor since the time of the Greeks to carve a statue that stood entirely by itself without any background, so that you can walk round it and view it from every side. That is what carving 'in the round' means. Thus he made one of the boldest steps away from the traditions of the mediæval sculptors, whose figures always stood in niches with their backs close to the wall, and sometimes fixed to it, and were really not much more than



139. DONATELLO : *David*
Bargello, Florence.

wall decorations. You will understand now how much easier it was for the sculptor to make his figures look lifelike than for



140. DONATELLO : *Gattamelata*
Padua.

the poor painter, who had to struggle with light and shade and perspective to give his pictures depth. The sculptor didn't have to bother about these things, because a statue creates them all for itself.

Donatello's statue of the Venetian soldier *Gattamelata* was the first equestrian statue in bronze since classical times, and is one of the finest in the world.

Maybe it has not the dramatic force and power of Verrocchio's *Colleoni*, who looks grim and threatening, but the rider is very majestic and lifelike in his sternness. The horse too is more restrained than Verrocchio's, but it has every suggestion of a fiery spirit, ready to plunge forward at the touch of a spur.

Verrocchio (1435-88) was a pupil of Donatello, and one of the most outstanding of Renaissance sculptures is his *Colleoni*, who was a great leader of mercenaries, or hired soldiers. Never before had vigour and movement been better portrayed. The bold rider displays in every line of his figure all the qualities one expects to find in a brave leader of men—courage, alertness, strength of purpose, defiance, and a lofty pride. Pride is also seen in his horse, its muscles



141. VERROCCHIO : *Colleoni*
Venice.

rippling beneath the skin, a magnificent animal as full of energy as the man it carries.

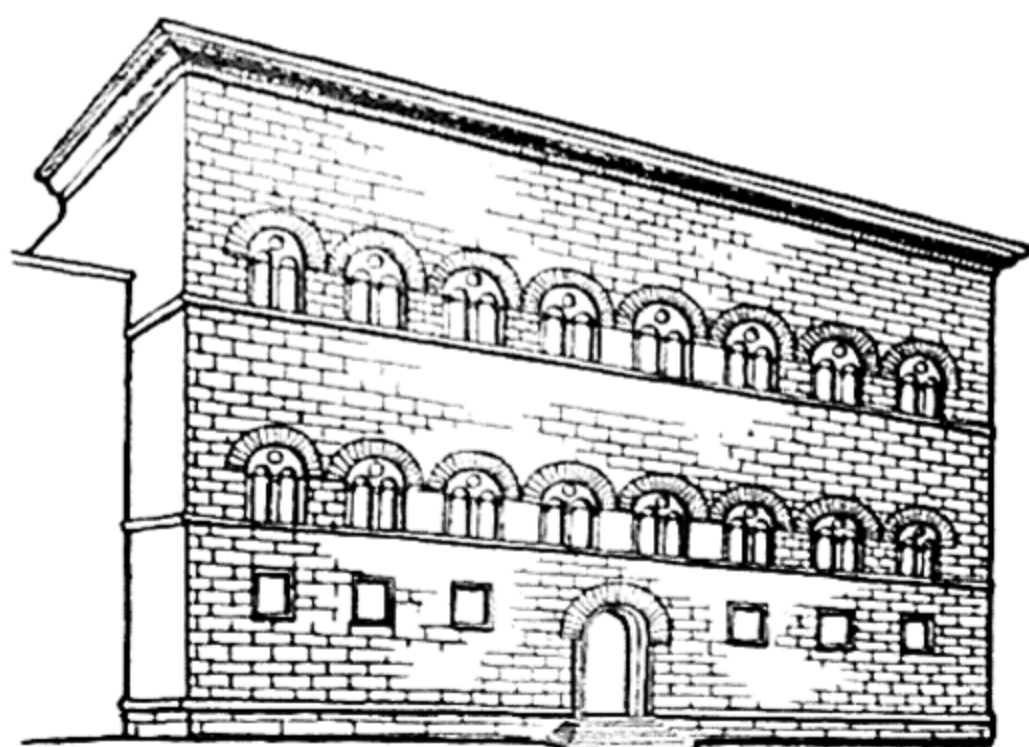
Florence was the centre of Renaissance sculpture during the fifteenth century, and her carvers inspired others all over Italy. But after the death of Michelangelo her fame gradually faded. All through the history of art we find that after a long and hard climb to the peak of greatness there follows almost immediately a descent more rapid than the ascent, into a depth where no genius shines and men seem content to work in an uninspired fashion. After Michelangelo the Florentine sculptors could not attain the quality and strength so clearly seen in his work, and Italian Renaissance sculpture no longer held the charm and brilliance of its earlier works.

I 3. *The Buildings of the Renaissance*

IN Chapter Eight we read that no new style of architecture ever comes about quickly or suddenly, but we will always find an exception to every rule. During the Renaissance Italy changed her style of building almost overnight. As we know, at this time artists and sculptors were eagerly studying the works of the ancient Romans and Greeks, and the builders also, after examining all the old buildings they could find and reconstructing some of them, began to evolve a style of building based on the methods used in the old days.

This style was brought about by an architect named Brunelleschi (1377-1446), who spent a great deal of time in and around Rome surveying and making notes about many of the old Roman buildings. On returning to his native city, Florence, he began to design buildings in a manner which other architects all over the country were only too glad to copy. They were pleased to get away from the Gothic style, for they had never been very happy with it, and now they welcomed the chance to return to the style they had always loved and understood. To them it was a golden opportunity to bring back the splendours of the past, and their new buildings always included some features from the ancient buildings.

Towers and spires were replaced by domes, the pointed Gothic arch by an old favourite, the rounded arch. Many wonderful churches were built at this time, the most magnificent being St Peter's. It was a style in which space and grandeur were aimed at, and the builders enriched it with Græco-Roman columns and capitals and friezes decorated with all kinds

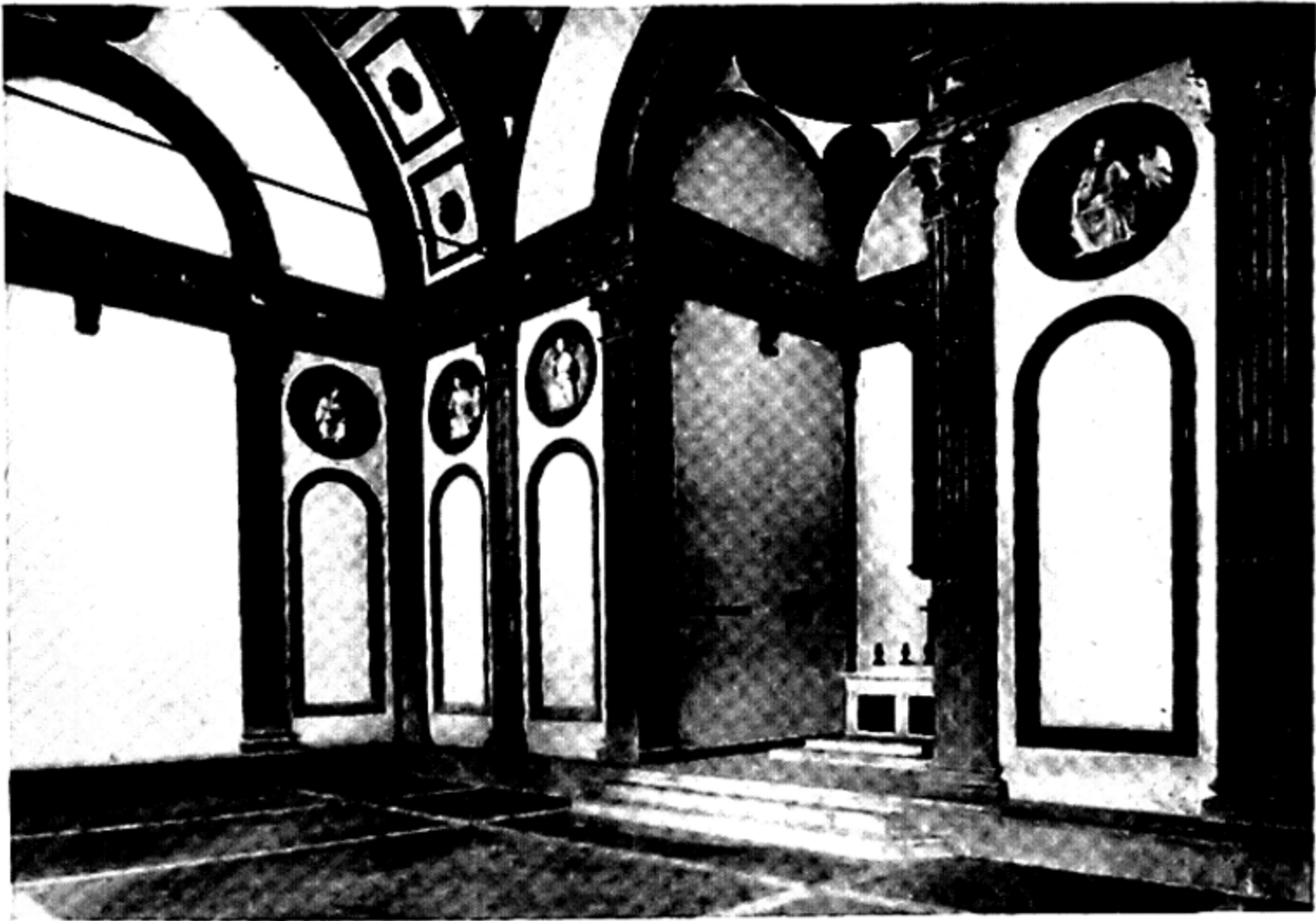


142. AN ITALIAN PALACE

of classical designs. All over Italy you will see their great houses and palaces, grim, grey, and severe, but beautifully designed and proportioned.

One of the very first buildings erected in the new Renaissance style was Brunelleschi's delightful little *Pazzi Chapel* in Florence.

Its bright interior is very simple, with plain white walls with columns, arches, and bands of grey stone. This plainness is relieved by a frieze and roundels of blue with white figures on them, and there are coloured roundels in the dome. It isn't



143. THE PAZZI CHAPEL, S. CROCE, FLORENCE

much like a classical temple, and there is nothing in it at all of the things which the Gothic builder considered so important, such as high windows and slim pillars. Brunelleschi used columns and arches and pilasters (flat half-columns) in a way that gives an air of gracefulness and lightness quite different from anything seen before.

Since his time architects in Europe and America have adapted the ideas of the first of the great Renaissance architects, and it would be difficult not to see in some of our big cities a few buildings in which classical columns and pediments have been used.

But, just as Gothic architecture in England was spoiled during the Decorated period by too much ornamentation, so the later

buildings of the Italian Renaissance lost the freshness of the earlier ones by having too many columns and pilasters stuck on the front of them, serving no useful purpose, and not really improving their appearance.

It was a long time before this fever for building in the classical style infected the rest of Europe, and when it did it was in a very mild and rather haphazard way. France did not adopt the style until about eighty years after it had grown in Italy, when Charles VIII returned from a visit there and told his people all about the glories of the new architecture he had seen. The magnificent palaces, with their wide, sweeping staircases, huge rooms, and large windows, were so much more dignified and noble than the more ordinary ones of the French. Could not his architects, too, design buildings as grand as these? They tried very hard to do so, helped by Italian artists who came to teach their arts to the French. But the latter loved their own Gothic style far too much, and the Italians quite failed to make them change their ways, although their pupils did make use of some of the details of the classic style.

England also was not quite ready for it, and by the time the new style arrived here it was not much like that known in Italy. It came to us through France and the Netherlands, and on its long, slow journey it had undergone many changes, because each country had its own ideas of what this classical architecture should be like. The English builders, too, had *their* ideas, and they spoiled it even more because they did not understand it and used it quite wrongly. They had no knowledge of the correct proportions of the buildings which the Greeks had worked out centuries before, and which the Italians had so faithfully followed.

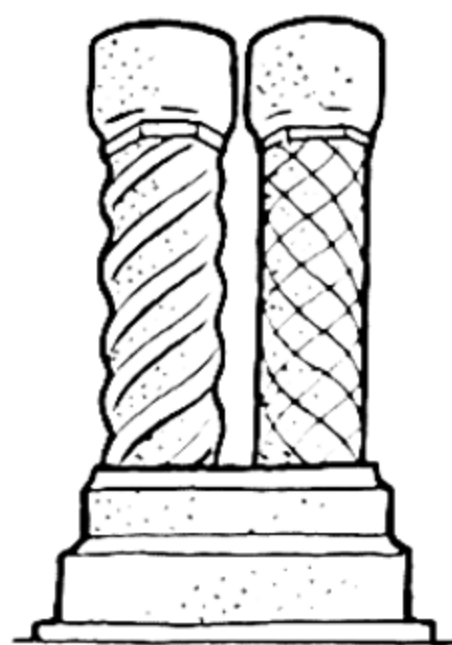
Inigo Jones was the first English architect to understand fully



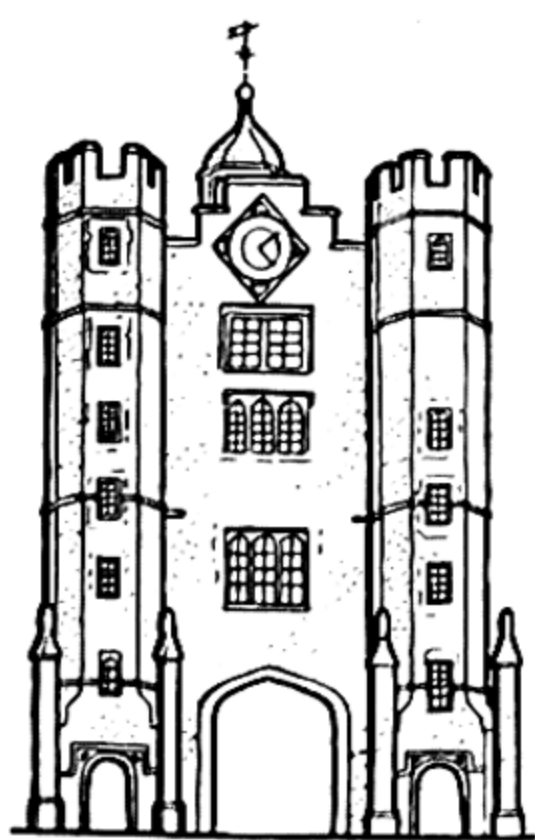
144. COMPTON WYNATES : AN EARLY TUDOR BUILDING

and appreciate the beauty and proportions of classical architecture. But before he arrived on the scene there was a period of transition in this country. That is, a time between the end of the Gothic era and the coming of true classical style. During this time we had two kinds of buildings, one known as Tudor, which was mainly mediæval in detail, and the other, usually referred to as Elizabethan and Jacobean, which was classical in detail, but not quite correct in its use and proportions.

We know all about the many problems that worried the Gothic builder, but the more fortunate builder of the sixteenth century did not have any of these to deal with. Most of his



145. TUDOR CHIMNEYS

146. TUDOR GATEHOUSE,
ST JAMES'S PALACE

buildings were much smaller. The Tudor house had smaller windows grouped in twos and threes, and the doors were smaller, too. Many of the houses were built of brick, a material much easier to handle than stone. Brick was very popular at this time, and both Henry VIII and Cardinal Wolsey had their palaces built of it.

Tudor houses always look very romantic and picturesque, with their warm red-brick walls, steep roofs, fantastic corkscrew chimneys, and many gables and turrets. The most notable feature of the larger houses was the Gatehouse. It consisted of a wide arch on each side of which was a tall octagonal (eight-sided) tower, like those of St James's Palace.

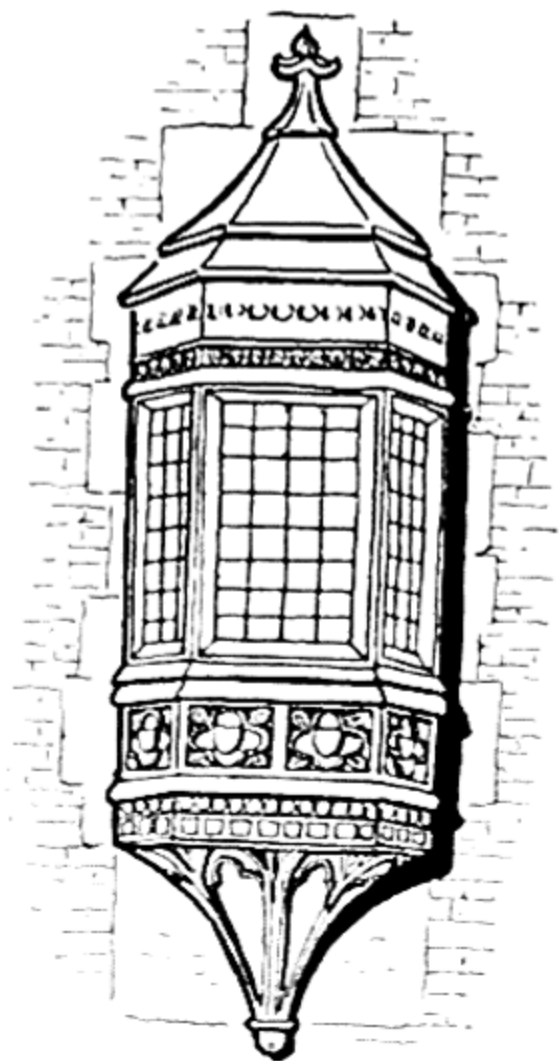
In districts where timber was plentiful, such as Lancashire and Warwickshire, the houses were built of oak beams between which panels of brick or plaster were laid in decorative patterns. Sometimes the lower part of the house was of brick and the upper part and the roof of wood. The streets



147. A TUDOR HOUSE

were very narrow, and as each storey of a tall house jutted beyond the lower one, the top windows almost touched those of the opposite house.

The Elizabethan builders still kept a few Gothic features, such as the Great Hall, with panelled walls, the gallery, and the dais, and they added to these a wide staircase in the classic style. They kept also the *oriel* (a small projecting window), *gables*, and *mullioned* windows, some of them decorated with Greek and Roman designs.

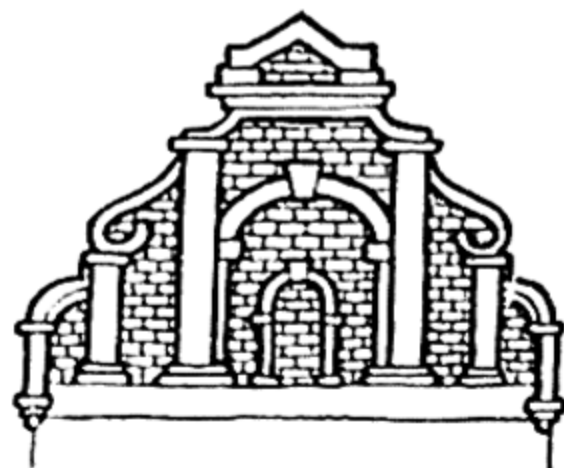


148. AN ORIEL WINDOW

Houses of the Jacobean period were different in many ways from those of the Tudor. All Gothic details disappeared; the windows were much larger and rectangular in shape, with many small diamond or square panes. Chimneys were no longer corkscrew, but were grouped in threes and fours and made to look like classical columns. The front door of the wealthy man's house was the most elaborate part of the whole building, and what a wonderfully fantastic thing it was! It usually had a semicircular arch with a peculiar kind of column, supposed to be classic, on each side, and above it reared a pile of stonework with the owner's coat-of-arms, statues of mythical heroes, pinnacles, and all kinds of things carved on it. The most common form of decoration, used inside and outside the house, was the *strap-ornament*, a design of straps interlacing one another, and this was quite often mixed up with other decorations,



149. ELIZABETHAN HALF-TIMBERED GABLE



150. JACOBEOAN CURVED BRICKWORK GABLE

such as fat little cupids, classic columns, and even Gothic heraldry.



151. HATFIELD HOUSE

A Jacobean building of the early seventeenth century.

Inigo Jones (1573–1652), after studying the architecture of Italy and grasping its true meaning, tried to put a stop to all this muddling. He was the first of our great architects, and he brought into England the true classic style. He tried very hard to copy Italian buildings in all his plans, but he soon discovered that the English climate and some of the English people in power interfered with his schemes, and he had to make many changes in his plans and ideas.

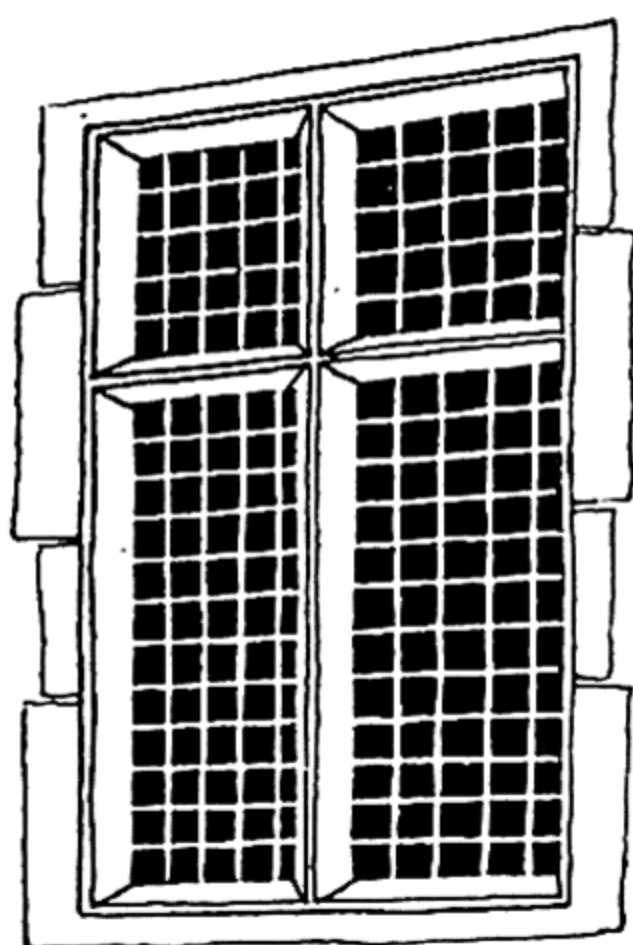
In Italy the artists and sculptors and builders worked together to make their towns as beautiful as possible by building splendid churches and palaces all richly decorated with statues and carvings and colour. But in England at this time the Puritans had much to say against such frivolous things. They disliked all forms of beauty, whether painted, carved, or built. So the revival of the classic style of architecture in this country was a very slow one, and not nearly so glorious as that of Italy.

However, Inigo Jones did his best against such disapproval, and he erected buildings that were neat, symmetrical,



152. "... A FANTASTIC THING "

and well-proportioned, and as strange to English eyes at first as an igloo would be in Piccadilly Circus to-day. The *Queen's*



153. MULLION WINDOW

The mullion is the upright.
The cross-piece is called a transom.

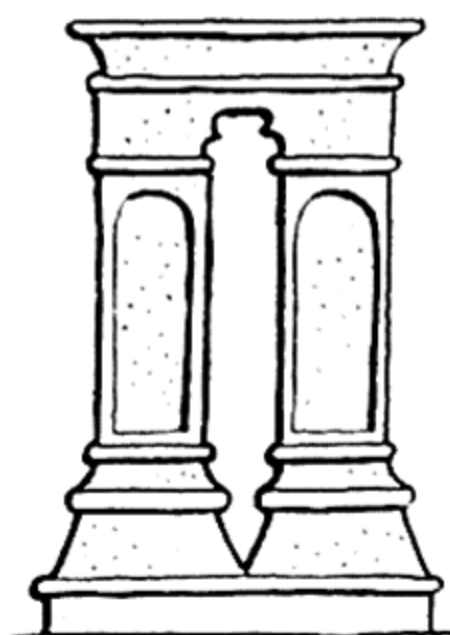
House at Greenwich was the first building in the true and full Italian manner to be erected in England. It had none of the gables and large mullioned windows of the former styles. Inigo Jones put a loggia on the south side (the other was added in the nineteenth century), and, with its sash-windows framed in the Italian style and a balustrade to hide the roof, the building looks exactly like an Italian villa, correct in every detail.

Of course, in this country, with all the rain and snow that we have, we need a fairly steeply sloped roof, not a flat or a slightly sloped roof as seen in Italy, and we need big windows in our dull weather. Inigo Jones had

to adapt the classical style to fit in with these large windows and sloping roofs with big chimneys, and he did this very successfully when he designed country houses by increasing the height of the walls so that they hid the roof. It is easy to see that the *Queen's House* was not built in the haphazard fashion of previous ages, when the builder was permitted to do just what he liked and thought best. Now a long time and much thought were spent in drawing plans,



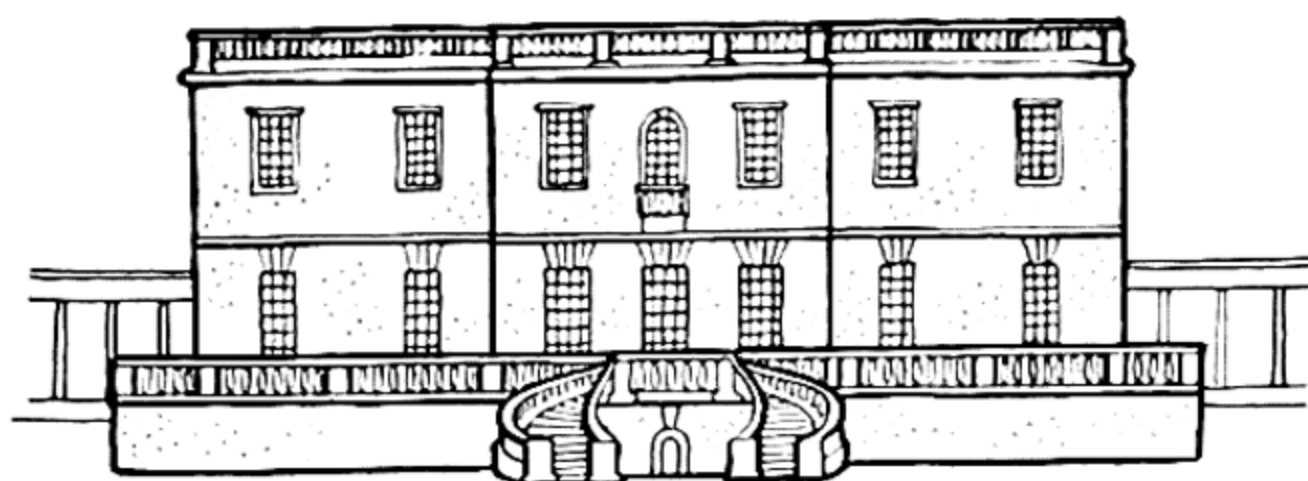
154. STRAP-ORNAMENT



155. JACOBEOAN CHIMNEYS

and measurements were carefully calculated even with doors and windows.

Another famous building by Inigo Jones was the *Banqueting*



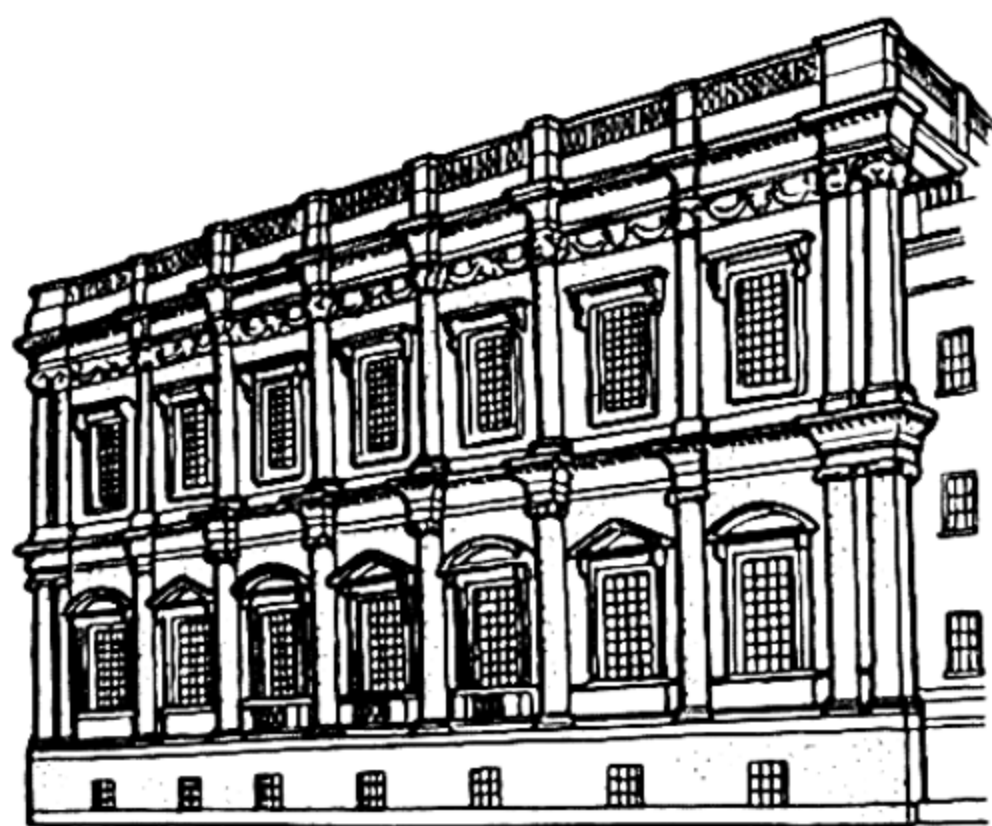
156. THE QUEEN'S HOUSE, GREENWICH

Hall (now a museum) of Whitehall Palace. Again we have a purely Italian building with nothing English about its appearance. All the classical forms are properly used, and no gables or chimneys break the straight lines of the cornice and balustrade. If this Hall were to be wafted away and put down in any Italian town it would be perfectly at home among its neighbours.

Sir Christopher Wren (1632–1723) was another architect who was much hampered in his work by the fussiness and lack of imagination of those in authority. After the Great Fire in 1666 he designed a plan for the rebuilding of the whole of London, in which all the narrow streets and crooked alleys would be replaced by wide, straight roads, and all “smoky trades” were

to be well outside the City boundaries. But, alas, although approved by the King, the rebuilding was never carried out.

Wren built many of London's parish churches, in each of which he reveals his genius. The City of London, in spite of the severe bomb-damage of the last war, still shows many of his spires rearing above the roofs of surrounding warehouses



157. THE BANQUETING HALL OF WHITEHALL PALACE

and blocks of offices. And how lovely they are, these glories of the ancient City! They are graceful and strong, and the churches over which they stand are beautifully proportioned and perfectly adapted to classical design. The interior of a Wren church is usually bright with gold, white plaster, and large windows. A gallery runs round the walls, and the ceiling is either flat or slightly curved.

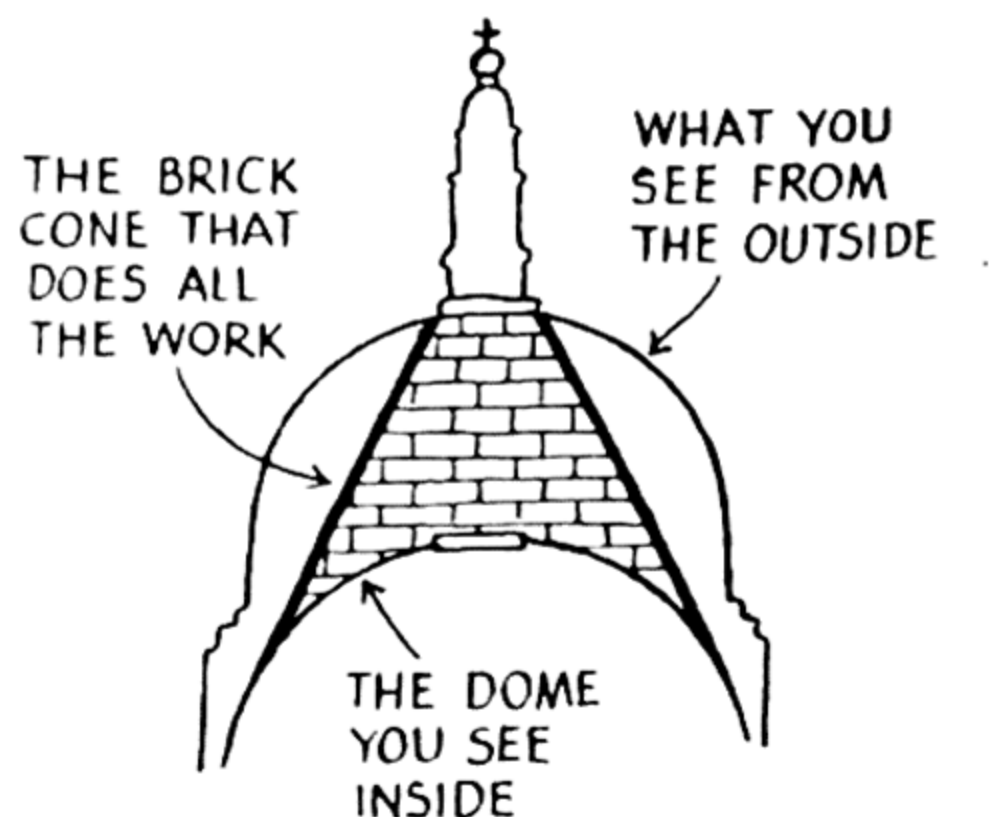


158. ST STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK

A number of his churches were built on sites of those destroyed in the Great Fire, and they were often very small in area and of difficult shapes. *St Stephen's, Walbrook*, is a typical example of what he did in such circumstances.

Although it is not much more than a very large room, he provided a nave, aisles, and transept, and gave the whole building an air of spaciousness.

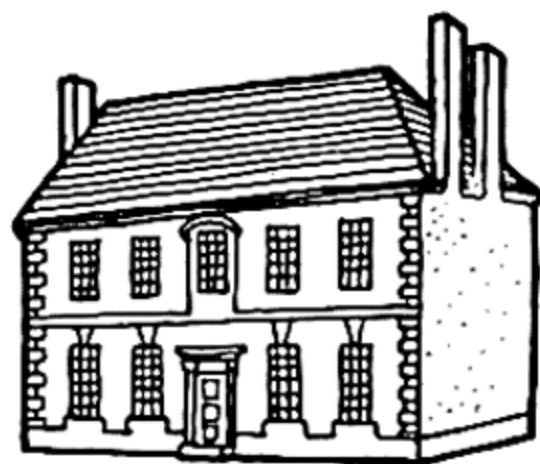
I suppose you have been waiting all this time for me to tell you what you already know—that he built St Paul's Cathedral, a building of which Englishmen are very proud. Wren liked domes, and he planned his cathedral so that a dome could be used. He built it in three parts, as the diagram here shows. Inside the cathedral is the inner dome, constructed so that it does not look too high for the rest of the interior. The outer dome, which is made of wood and covered with lead, gives the impressive height to the building which Wren wanted. But the part



159. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DOME OF ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

that does all the work of supporting the stone lantern, ball, and cross is a cone of brick hidden between the other two domes.

In a Gothic building nothing is concealed, but in Renaissance architecture a great deal is hidden from our eyes, and things are not what they appear to be. For instance, the side-aisles of St Paul's are low, like those of a Gothic church, but from the outside their high walls give us an entirely wrong idea of their true height. Although it is one of the finest of its type in England, it is not one



160. A QUEEN ANNE HOUSE

of the world's greatest buildings. It was a remarkable and difficult engineering feat, such as only a man like Wren, who loved a difficult task, could perform. For all its grandeur and size, its massive pillars, its mosaics, it lacks the warmth and comfortable feeling of some of his smaller and simpler churches.

Wren's influence on English architecture brought about the Queen Anne style of house. This, with its arched doorway, regularly spaced windows, and steep four-sided roof, looks very



161. A QUEEN ANNE DOORWAY

much like an overgrown doll's house. The type of roof used is called a *hipped-roof*, with four sides sloping up from the eaves to the ridge, so that the classical 'straight line' round the tops of the walls is still preserved. You can easily identify a Queen Anne house by its beautiful doorway of stone, brick, or wood, with its straight or curved canopy supported on carved brackets. The inside of the curved canopy is sometimes decorated in a shell pattern.

After the death of Wren English architecture became very dull and lacking in imagination. And once more we repeat our familiar ending. The builders could not think of anything new, so they tried to get variety into their buildings by putting on them meaningless and useless decorations.

14. *The End of the Renaissance*

WE left the Flemish painters with Breughel creating his colourful and jolly pictures of peasant life, and now we meet another Flemish artist who also thoroughly enjoyed painting pictures of country people in a gay, bank-holiday mood. But these were not his most important pictures.

Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) was one of the most famous of the Flemish artists, who, after a long stay in Venice, returned to his own country and began to paint, in a quite un-Flemish manner, religious and pagan pictures as well as many fine portraits.

The earlier Flemish artists painted mostly small pictures and drew their figures from imagination, but Rubens used living models for his works, and his wife often posed for the Madonna or Mary Magdalene, and we see her frequently in some of his pictures of myths and legends. He painted what he liked of the world around him, and no other artist of his country and time rivalled him in the handling of brush and colour, figures and drapery, and the arrangement, or composition, of his pictures, which were very much larger than those of the fifteenth-century painters. Large pictures were now in great demand, and Rubens produced many—religious, classical scenes, portraits, magnificent landscapes, hunting-scenes, and animal studies—bringing more life, light, movement, space, and figures into them.

Since the death of Breughel Flemish painting had not been outstanding, but the genius and inspiration of Rubens gave it new life, and it soon rose to the first rank in Europe. Antwerp became the centre of art in Flanders, and Rubens ruled over it like a king. So busy was he coping with demands for his work that he often made only a small, rough sketch for a picture, and then gave it to his pupils to copy on to a larger canvas. When this was done he would add the finishing touches to it, smoothing out a little roughness here and there or softening a face or the folds of a dress. His studio was like a factory, turning out splendid pictures for palaces and churches.

He was never really a religious painter, like Botticelli or Fra

Angelico, for his joy in playing with colour and arranging his figures was apt to make him forget the seriousness of his subject. In his hands such pictures became not devout works to inspire people to live better lives or to teach the truths of Christianity, but gorgeous decorations gleaming with colour and brimming over with life, and with more than a hint of paganism in them.

But his *Descent from the Cross* is considered one of his finest religious pictures. The play of brilliant light on the sheet and on the body of Our Lord against the dark background, the attitudes of the men, especially that of St John, who, with one foot on the ladder, tenses his body to support the weight of the dead Christ, and the grouping of the sorrowing women, all make this picture one of sincerity and great beauty.

Many brilliant Flemish artists followed him, but they did not reach his great heights, and we need talk about only one of them, Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), who proved himself a worthy pupil of his master.

Like Holbein, van Dyck came to England, was promoted to Court Painter, and painted many portraits of the King (Charles I) and of the royal family and many nobles. He based his style on that of Rubens, but how different his work is from that of his master! Rubens loved a lusty, vigorous figure, full of movement, bubbling with life and energy, and all his pictures are exciting. But van Dyck's ladies and gentlemen look—well, like ladies and gentlemen who could not possibly behave in a



162. RUBENS : *The Descent from the Cross*
Antwerp Cathedral.

riotous manner. They are serene, dignified, brilliant, elegant in dress, and obviously very well-mannered.

He painted a few religious pictures, but it is as a portrait-painter that he is remembered and admired. In the picture of *Charles I on Horseback* we have a fine portrait of this unfortunate king. He is doing nothing exciting, no rapid movement makes us hold our breath, but we are at once made aware of the dignity and regal bearing of a monarch who was a very intelligent and cultured man and a great lover of the arts. If he had not en-



163. VAN DYCK: *Charles I on Horseback*
National Gallery.

couraged van Dyck to live in England there would quite probably not have been the great portrait-painters who flourished in England in the eighteenth century, for van Dyck's work had a strong influence on English portrait-painting.

I am sure you have often seen the gay gentleman pictured opposite. This must easily be one of the most popular and best-known pictures in the world. It was painted by Franz Hals (1580-1666), a Dutchman who, with Rubens, helped

to lift the art of the Low Countries out of the rut in which it had lain for so long. He was a very human painter who revealed in his work his mood of the moment. If he was bored or in a lazy frame of mind his work was slapdash and slovenly, but after a pleasant time drinking with his friends he would be in a good temper, and then his painting showed all the recklessness and jollity of his happy-go-lucky nature. *The Laughing Cavalier* must have been painted when he felt that all was well with the world.

Who can resist a feeling of companionship with that faint smile that looks as if it might suddenly change into a deafening

roar of laughter? I think that the Cavalier could almost be a portrait of Hals himself, not perhaps in likeness of features, but as a representation of his own high spirits. The way he has handled brush and paint seems to suggest that he has, in a flash, caught the Cavalier as he turns towards the painter for a brief moment to ask a question. But on looking into the picture more carefully we realize that it is well thought out, and what appears to be hastily brushed in is really a very careful study, especially of the fine lace of the collar and cuffs. He painted many pictures of his fellow-countrymen, gipsies, strolling-players, and fiddlers, with a keen, steady eye and hand and a sense of humour, and he gave a definite character and life to the most ordinary face.

The greatest of all the Dutch painters was Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-69). When he was not painting a picture for some one else he did not remain idle, but painted portraits of himself, and these are among his finest works. They tell us his life-story from the time of confident

youth, through the cares of middle age, until we see him as an old man with a ragged beard, deeply lined face, and brow furrowed with worry, yet with eyes full of wisdom and serenity. He was very fond of painting pictures of old men and women, and he had the great and rare gift of making the plain, wrinkled face of old age seem as beautiful and fresh as that of a young man or girl.

On p. 146 is a picture of his mother, which he painted a year before her death. How well Rembrandt shows weariness in her gentle face, now wrinkled with age and illness, as, tired out, she rests her hands on her stick, while her head droops as if she is too



164. HALS : *The Laughing Cavalier*
Wallace Collection.

weary to hold it up any longer. The soft outlines of her dress help to create an air of resignation of a woman who is suffering from some illness which she accepts with meekness. Because he could see beneath the surface of people and into their minds and hearts he was able to make beautiful what would seem downright plain or even ugly to us, who can see only with the eyes of the body, and not of the mind. Rembrandt himself knew great hardships during his life, and he could show sympathy and understanding for others who suffered.



165. REMBRANDT : *The Artist's Mother*
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

He found that not only sunshine but shadow also could be used to make a scene more dramatic and powerful, and in many of his pictures we see a bright light resting on a figure, making it the centre of attraction. In his *Christ at Emmaus* he shows us how skilful he was in making light play an important part in the picture. The light glows on the white tablecloth and reflects on the faces of Our Lord and those with Him. Rembrandt never used bright colours, preferring different tones of black, brown, and

dull red, content to let the light relieve the sombre backgrounds.

He died in extreme poverty, leaving behind him only some old clothes and his brushes and paints. It is sad to think of such a great master ending his brilliant life in this way, when to-day any one of his pictures is worth thousands of pounds to its owner.

As a contrast to the dark tones of Rembrandt's pictures, on p. 148 is one full of sparkling light. One can imagine the artist, Vermeer (1632-75), entering a room, pulling back the curtains, opening wide the window, and saying, "I will paint a picture of the light in this room!" And that is just what he does. Look at

any of his pictures, and you will see light spilling over everything in the room—walls, furniture, tiled floors, carpets, and a girl putting on a necklace or reading a letter. Light streams out of the picture and flows all round you.

He was very clever in painting the textures of things, so that you can almost feel the silkiness or coarseness of a fabric, the cold smoothness of a glazed bowl, or the roughness of an earthenware jar. Like van Eyck, Vermeer makes the most trifling object important by careful spacing and arrangement and letting the



166. REMBRANDT : *Christ at Emmaus*

Louvre.

light fall on it in a certain way, thus showing that insignificant objects often make a perfect picture. He did not paint many pictures, because he was a very slow and careful worker, continually going over and over everything until it satisfied him. As a colourist he was one of the finest in the world.

Towards the end of Rembrandt's life Dutch painters began to look to Italy for inspiration and guidance, and it was not long before they grew lazy, and, as luxury increased with the prosperity of the country, Dutch painting ceased to maintain its high level. In 1672 Louis XIV invaded the Low Countries, and from that time the Dutch School of painting ceased to exist.

From the Low Countries we go to France, where Nicholas Poussin (1594-1665) and Claude Lorrain (1600-82) were busily laying the foundations of modern French painting. In both France and the Netherlands in the seventeenth century landscape-painting became very popular. But the artists, for some reason or another, never called their pictures just landscapes. They would put in a few figures, so small that they were almost lost in the glory of huge trees and majestic buildings, stately columns and large skies, and the picture often bore a title like "Landscape



167. VERMEER : *The Necklace*

Berlin.

with Figures," or, as Claude called one of his works, *Landscape: The Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca*. But which, do you think, interested Claude most? The minute and obviously unimportant figures or the beautiful trees, the smooth, calm water, and the wide, clear sky? It would seem that such artists were ashamed to be known as purely landscape-painters.

Poussin, like many artists of his time, studied in Italy, and his work is more Italian than French in feeling. Both he and

Claude were in love with classical themes, such as stories of the gods and heroes of ancient times, but Claude was more of a romantic than Poussin, who was greatly influenced by Renaissance paganism. Poussin often placed his gods and goddesses, and, sometimes, in a religious picture, his saints also, against a background of trees, broken columns, and deserted temples, as seen in his *St John on Patmos*.

It was a romantic age, in which a romantic feeling was very obvious. It was the correct thing to do to paint pictures in which sad ruins and an air of desolation played some part. Maybe it was because the artists regretted the passing of those days which

seemed so glorious to them, just as elderly people to-day speak of the 'good old days' (which weren't always very good) of fifty years ago.



168. CLAUDE : *Landscape : The Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca*
National Gallery.

Claude preferred landscapes to figure paintings, and he would spend all day out of doors, from dawn to dusk, watching, as the sun crept across the sky, how the changing light altered



169. POUSSIN : *St John on Patmos*
Chicago.

the colours and the shapes of objects around him. His pictures are calm and peaceful, full of a golden or silvery light, like scenes from another and better world. His figures are unimportant, for Claude used them only as minor details to give a human interest to the scene. He once said that he sold his landscapes, but gave away his figures for nothing.

One of his earliest and finest paintings is *The Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba*. Here we find it difficult to take much notice



170. CLAUDE : *Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba*
National Gallery.

of the figures, for our attention is caught and held by the beauty of the sky, which throbs with light, and the sun on the water. It is easy to see that Claude was more interested in the noble classical temples with their lofty porticoes, the distant tower, and the ships than in the figures, for we have to look carefully for the Queen of Sheba standing with her courtiers on the steps. They can be regarded as an 'excuse' for the painting of the picture, which is, of course, another of those "Landscape with Figures" paintings. They are there merely to supply the title of the picture.

Silken-dressed ladies in wide skirts dancing gaily in a masquerade, gentlemen in fine clothes and lace ruffles, dainty statues beneath overhanging trees set in a beautiful parkland—

such are the unreal but charming pictures that Watteau (1684-1721) offers us. They are highly romantic, these ladies and gentlemen, living in a world of romance and make-believe, where nothing is ugly and everything is perfect, a world of dreams from which we hope they will never awake.

Watteau is one of the most important painters of the French School, who, although he carried on the traditions of Claude and Poussin, was more influenced by the Flemish and Dutch painters than by the Italian. He had a hard life as a child, and the dream-pictures he created were probably a means of escape from his



171. WATTEAU : *The Embarkation for Cythera*
Louvre.

bitter memories to a world where hardship was unknown and life a pleasant pastime without cares and worries. Besides, he was a very sick man, and his pictures are tinged with a sadness that is felt rather than seen. In spite of their gaiety, the figures seem to be wondering how long all this pleasantness can last.

His masterpiece, *The Embarkation for Cythera*, shows a gathering of ladies and gentlemen about to embark for the Isle of Love, where they will worship in the temple of Venus. Poor Watteau ! He lived in a romantic age, but he enjoyed little romance during his life, except that which he put into his pictures.

One of the greatest painters Spain has ever produced is Velasquez (1599-1660), and he was far above any that came before him. Perhaps you will say, "But what about El Greco ?" But El Greco was a Greek, not a Spaniard, and although he certainly set all Spain talking about his strange and wonderful

pictures, his style did not take root, and he established no School. Many copied his technique, but how could anyone understand the working of his mind or see the visions that he saw? His successors were realists like the Italians. That is, they painted straightforward, everyday subjects. Velasquez, however, left them all far behind, and his is one of the few names we think of when we talk about Spanish painting.

He was Court Painter to Philip IV, of whom he painted many



172. VELASQUEZ : *The Infanta Margarita*
Prado, Madrid.

portraits at various stages of the monarch's life. Yet, in spite of painting the same subject so often, he managed to give something fresh each time. But what is most important in his work is his ability to paint objects and people just as he saw them. This seems a natural thing for any artist to do, but many of them tried to idealize their portraits, so that we cannot be sure that the face in the picture is quite true to life.

His pictures are very subdued in colour. Grey, silver, dull red, green, brown, and black seem to have been his favourite colours. He loved children, and he has given us many delightful pictures of them, like that of the *Infanta Margarita*. Although very young, she already has the proud and solemn air of a perfect little lady. All small girls like dressing up, and this might be a picture of a girl of to-day who has stolen upstairs to the attic, found an old-fashioned dress and put it on, and is pretending to be a princess. Velasquez shows here that he was not so much interested in painting a portrait of a child as in giving a picture of her dress, and this impression is conveyed in a number of his pictures of children.

One of his finest works is *The Surrender of Breda*, which depicts the last victory of Spain in the Netherlands before the fortunes of war turned against her and drove her out of the Low Countries. We have a splendid picture of soldiers, conquerors and vanquished, with lances raised against the sky. In spite of all the attraction of these armed men, we are impressed by the nobility of the two main figures—Justin, the representative of the defeated Dutch, and the Spanish victor, Spinola. There is no bitterness or fear but dignity and pride in his attitude as Justin hands the key of the city to the Spanish commander, who, with gentlemanly courtesy, lays a kindly hand on the shoulder of his recent opponent. All the horrors of war are hidden away, and we see only the respect and humanity that one man offers his brave but defeated foe.



173. VELASQUEZ : *The Surrender of Breda*
Prado, Madrid.

15. *The Age of Exaggeration*

WHAT do you think of the church pictured here? Could you feel at home in it, or would you prefer the simple plainness of an ordinary English parish church? Not every one likes such a display of ornament, but, as we know, the Italians had always been fond of plenty of decoration in their buildings, and they certainly showed their love of it during the seventeenth century.



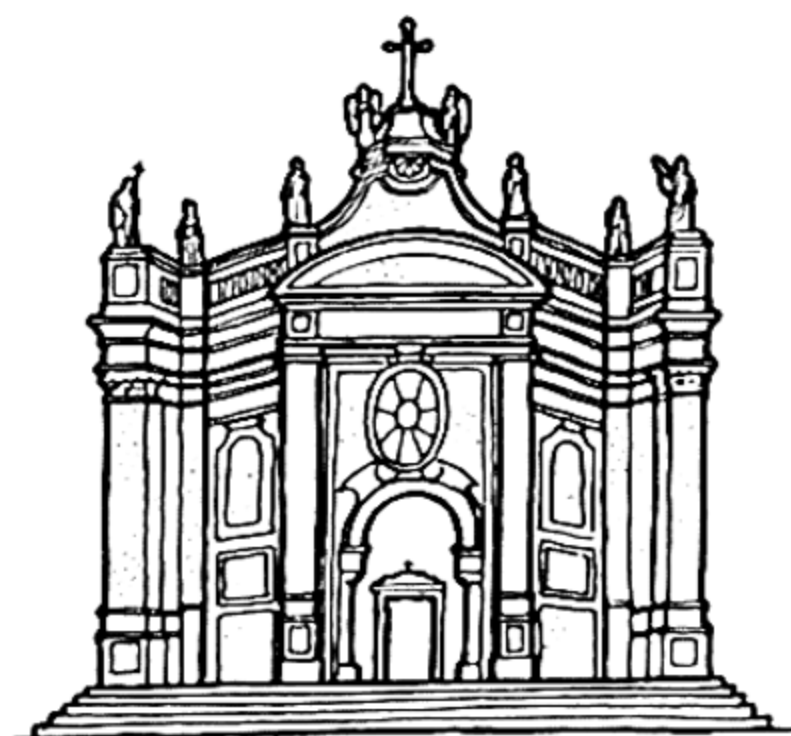
174. A BAROQUE CHURCH : SANTA CHIARA, NAPLES

It is typical of what you will find in many Italian churches built during that century. This style came into being during the Counter-Reformation, which was a movement begun by those great teachers the Jesuits as an answer and a challenge to both Protestantism and the wave of paganism that was engulfing Italy and a large part of Europe. The Jesuits encouraged the growth of this ornate style because it so well expressed their defiance of the Church's enemies, and they used it in all their new churches all over the world.

By the time the seventeenth century had got into its stride

the Italian painters, sculptors, and builders had got into theirs too, and they all worked in a fever of religious excitement and enthusiasm. It was hoped that such a display of magnificence as they created would win many people back to the Church. No doubt this *Baroque* style, as it was called, did succeed in its aim to a certain degree. The Latin races—Italian, French, Spanish—are much more emotional than we stolid and quieter English. That is, they could be made to ‘feel good’ by crowds of stone figures and pictures of cherubs and bright-winged angels all looking very busy and very much alive. They represented the glory of the Heaven for which they all longed and hoped to gain some day. If the artists and builders did not succeed in restoring the full power of the Church they certainly sprang some surprises in their efforts to do so.

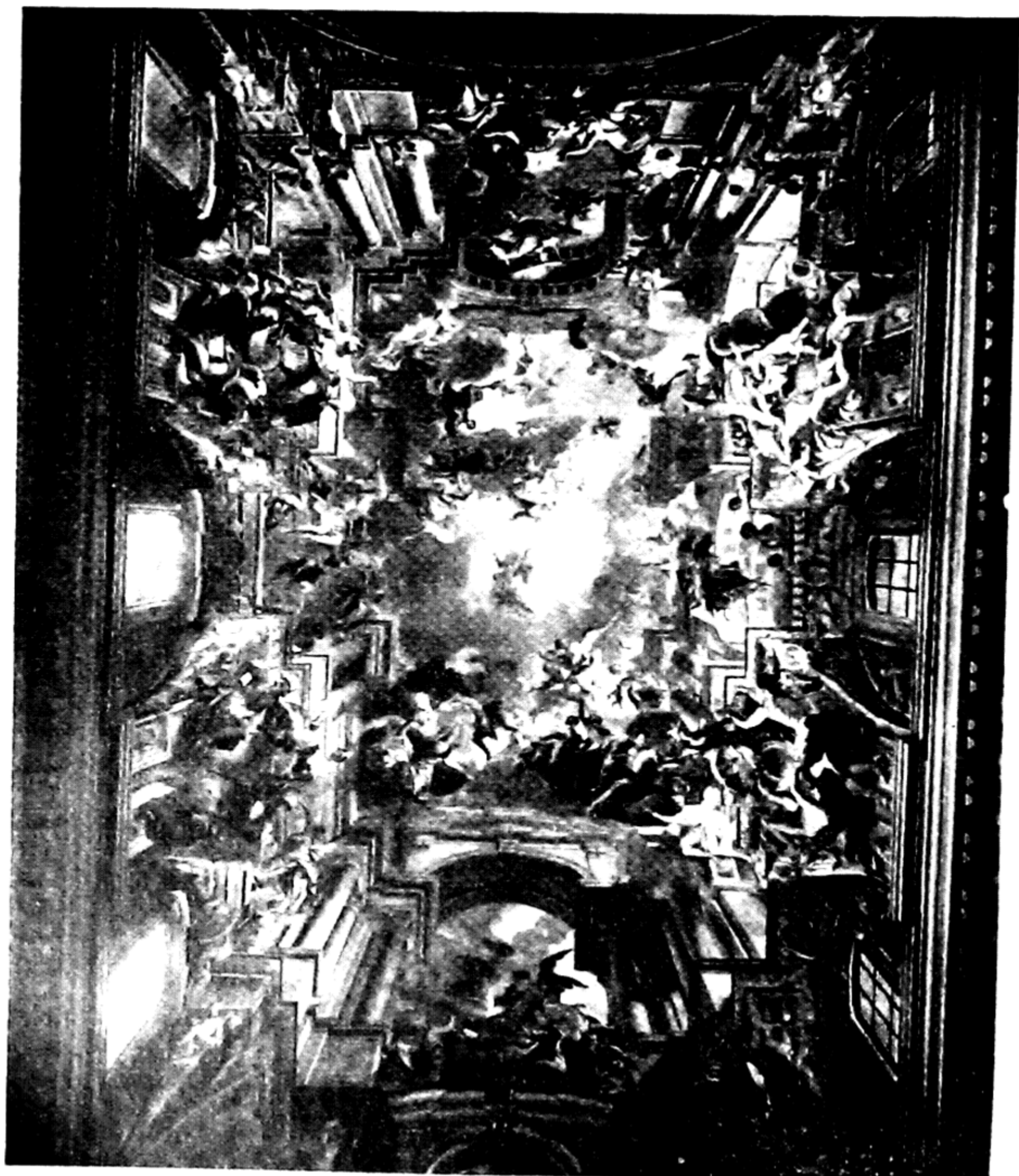
And that is just what Baroque does and what it set out to do. It shocks, stupefies, and bewilders us, and leaves us breathless. It is full of surprises. It breaks all the laws of good classic building, and if to some of us it shows a lack of good taste we cannot for a moment doubt the sincerity of these extraordinary artists and builders.



175. A BAROQUE CHURCH

Let us leave the hot, quiet street of any Italian town and go into one of these churches for cool shelter. We open the door, look around—and gasp. The walls seem to be alive with stone figures, most of them in some form of movement, with draperies fluttering about them. They flit round doorways and windows, pause here and there to perch precariously on narrow ledges, stand in niches which seem much too small for them, sweep upward and onward in frantic flight, or descend with outspread wings from stone clouds. The air seems filled with the sound of beating wings and rustling garments. So silent yet so eloquent, so still yet so full of the breath of life, we are either lost in admiration or repelled by these restless figures.

As we walk round on tiptoe, intruders in all this silent busyness, we come upon a tomb which almost makes us want to hurry away. Curtains, carved in stone or marble, are draped



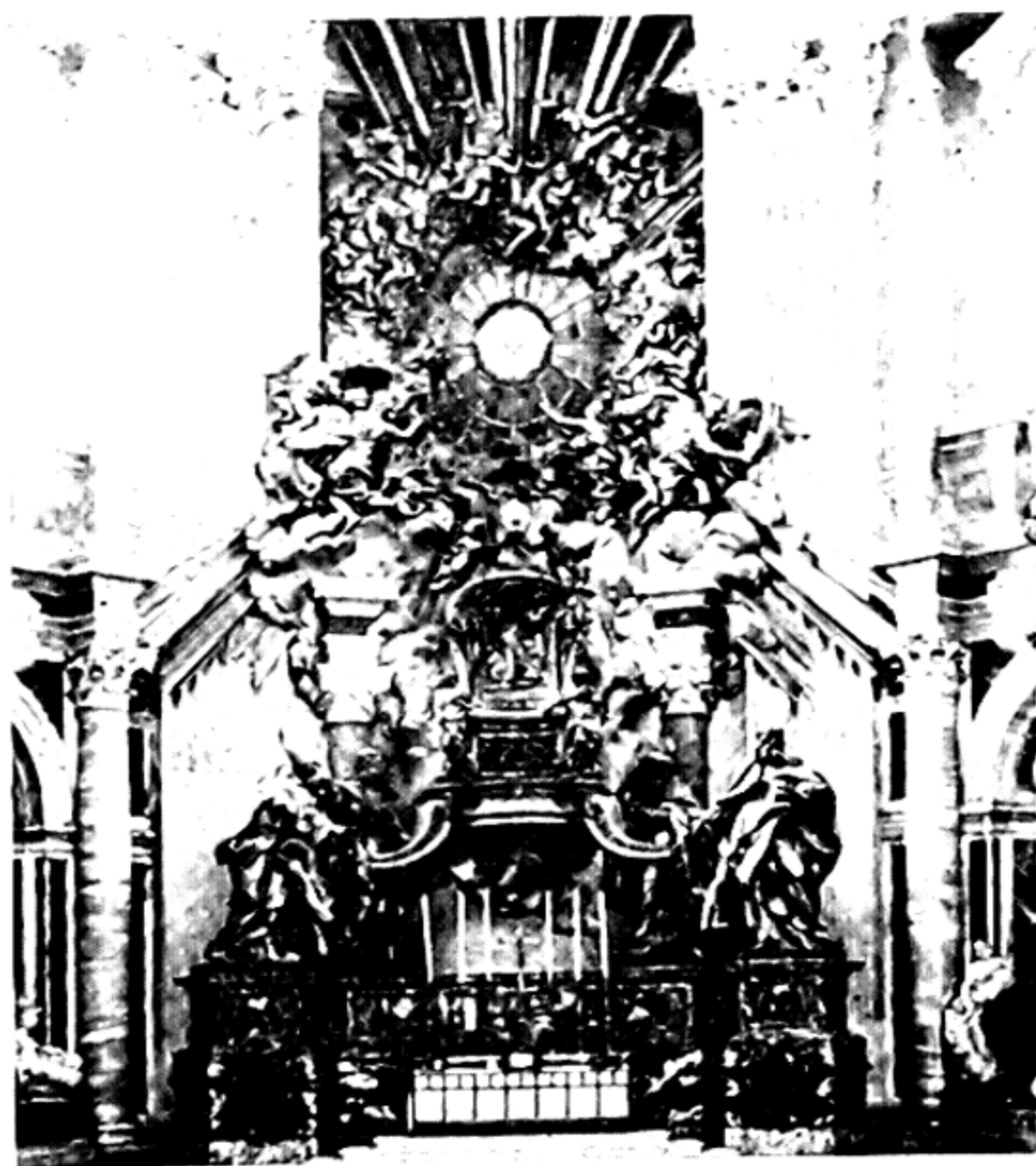
176. *The Entry of St Ignatius into Heaven*

Rome

over and around it, and a skeleton, shrouded in a cloak, grins at us and threatens us with a spear.

Over our heads the ceiling may be painted, like that of the church of St Ignatius in Rome. This shows the entry of St Ignatius into Heaven, but it would be difficult indeed to find the saint among this turbulent throng of angels flying about in what seems to be limitless space. We might be looking through a hole in the roof up into the very heart of Heaven itself, where the celestial beings, lost in excitement and happiness in welcoming the saint, come into the church itself to tell us the good news.

Quite often the figures, finding no more room to stand or flutter, crowd out from the walls and ceiling and mingle with painted clouds and curtains, so that it is hard to tell what is painted and what is carved. You can see in the picture of the altar of St Peter's Chair what a strange and startling effect of surging life and movement this gives. Writhing figures, clouds,

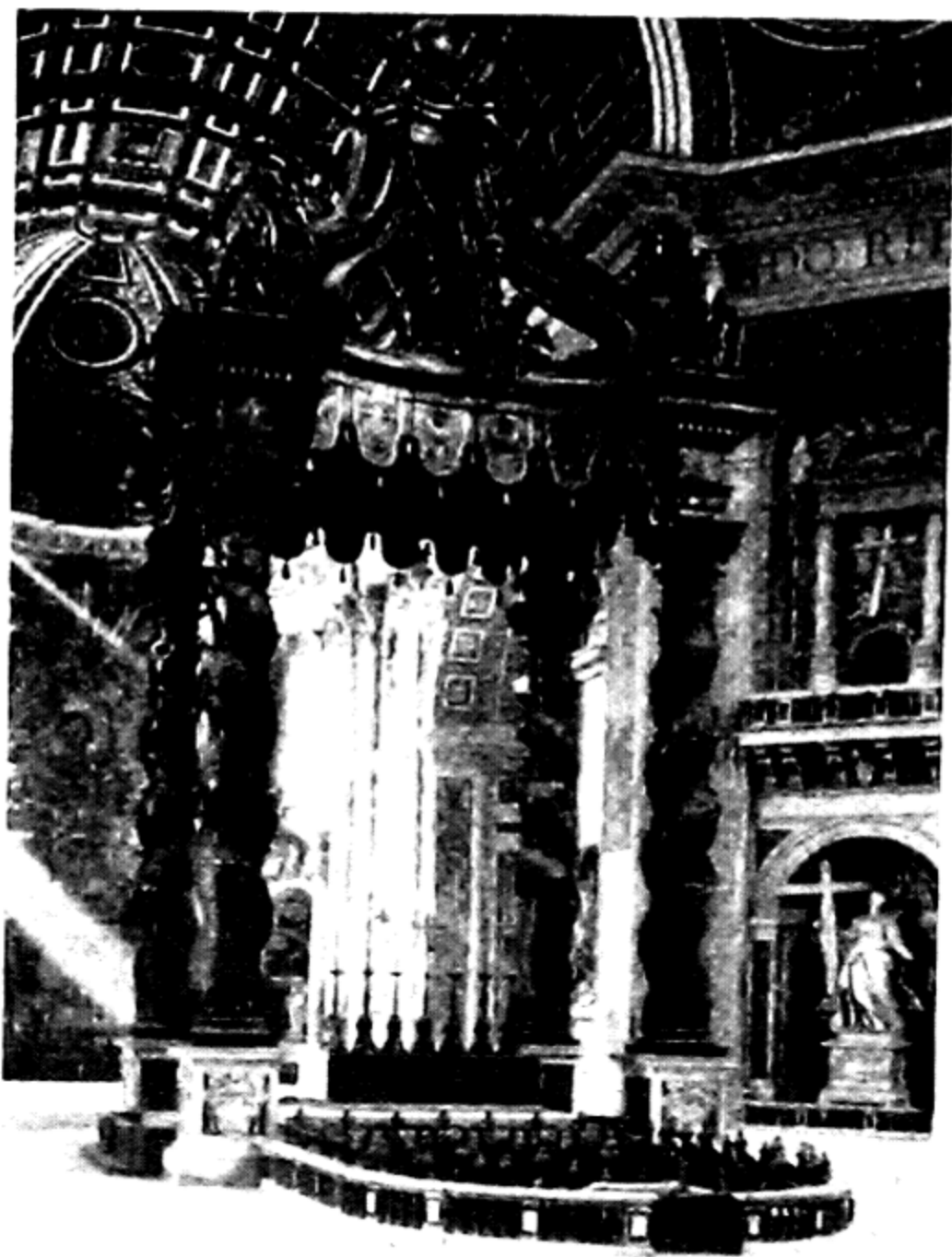


177. THE ALTAR OF ST PETER'S CHAIR

and sun-rays all help to make a scene of splendour and pride. There is something joyous about it, and yet we are not sure whether we really like it or not. Perhaps it seems very pompous, artificial, and a little undignified, but life in those days was pompous, artificial, and at times undignified.

Somehow we seem to have strayed from our quiet little church into St Peter's, so let us stay a while and look around the largest church in the world. Pope Urban VIII asked Bernini (1598-1680), one of the foremost Baroque sculptors and architects, to decorate the nave, and Bernini seems to have done so with great zest. He used a great deal of bronze and gold,

introduced stone curtains with lacy frills and fringes, huge stone cherubs and angels and saints, so that all the peace and calm which



178. THE BALDACHIN OVER THE HIGH ALTAR,
ST PETER'S, ROME

we should feel in this wonderful church are destroyed by the hugeness of everything and the energetic liveliness of the figures. It would not be easy to say your prayers in such surroundings, for your eyes and mind would be wandering amid all this profusion of statuary and colour.

Bernini designed the altar described above, and also the vast *baldachin*, or canopy, over the High Altar in St Peter's. The baldachin is curved, and supported on four twisted 'barley-sugar' columns, which he designed and which set a new fashion in columns. But we can forgive him all this rather

vulgar display when we walk in his wonderful loggia, which sweeps, crescent-shaped, on either side of the entrance to the church.

Bernini had a great influence on seventeenth-century sculpture



179. ST PETER'S, ROME
Showing Michelangelo's Dome and Bernini's Colonnade.

in other countries of Europe as well as in Italy. He was called the Rubens of sculpture, and his figures, like those of Rubens, who was the most prominent of Baroque painters, have a vigorous movement entirely new in sculpture. He often made use of the arts of the painter to give an even greater effect to his work, and behind some of his sculptured groups the background scenes are painted.

Many sculptors borrowed from the painters the use of clouds and rays of light, which look quite right in a painting, but are not subjects entirely suitable for stone or marble. But they used them with great skill, and sometimes achieved remarkable effects.

Bernini's best-known work is his *St Teresa in Ecstasy*. In life this saint was a tough, busy little woman, not at all the kind one would imagine seeing visions, but she sometimes went into trances, or ecstasies, in which she spoke with Our Lord. Bernini has shown her in one of these trances lying on a stone cloud, at the feet of an angel who is about to thrust



180. BERNINI: *St Teresa in Ecstasy*

the arrow of Love into her heart. Again we have the rays of light, a symbol of heavenly favour, playing upon the motionless body.

In spite of all its life and frenzied movement, in spite of all the new methods of skilful representation, the work of the sculptors of the late Renaissance shows little if any real spiritual force. It is so obviously trying to be clever and sensational. There is energy and splendour in plenty, but none of the grandeur and solemnity of the earlier Renaissance. Michelangelo's *Pietà* fills us with sadness, but the Baroque sculptor stirs us only with a feeling of discomfort and impatience, and, in some of us, a definite dislike of his work.

In architecture too everything was done to surprise and shock. The general plan of the Renaissance classic building was used, but many features underwent a violent change. Pediments were suddenly interrupted in the centre, heavy mouldings upset the even lines of the building, gables and buttresses were often curved. The walls, which had once been quite plain, were now dotted with panels, niches, and all kinds of decorations. The whole building reminds us of the pictures of palaces or large halls painted on a stage back-cloth for a ballet or an opera. Again, effect was the main thing the builders thought about. By narrowing its width at the top a stairway was made to look much longer than it really was, or a corridor looked longer because the walls converged, or came in slightly towards each other, at one end.

Painters also were not free of this charge of sensationalism. Rubens displays it in a number of his pictures, especially in those illustrating some event that really took place. In some of them angels fly among heavy clouds, nymphs rise from the sea, allegorical figures in flimsy draperies pose gracefully. They all look very charming and important, but there is really no need for them to be there, except to emphasize the glory and splendour of the occasion. The picture becomes a mixture of realism and fantasy. But they are signs of the times, times of luxury and exaggeration, when men tried to create a feeling of freedom by a defiance of all the known and accepted laws of art.

16. *Painting in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*

ITALY, France, and Holland had each shone brilliantly for a while in the world of art, and it must have been quite a shock to Europe when, in the eighteenth century, England, after a silence of two hundred years, suddenly announced that she too had painters as good as many of those the Continent had produced. The Renaissance had not affected our country very much in the realm of art. Perhaps we had been too busy building an empire to bother a great deal about such pretty but useless things as statues and pictures. Anyway, we had, with men like Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton, led the world in literature, and that seemed quite enough to go on with.

For a long time we had been content to invite foreign artists to paint our portraits, but now we no longer had any need of them. Although they looked to Rubens, Claude, van Dyck, and the Dutch painters for guidance, our painters did not become mere copyists of their work. They remained very English in their thoughts, ideas, and styles. A strange attitude towards pictures and painters was held by those who bought and sold pictures in those days. They said that unless an artist painted pictures that looked like those done by the great masters of Italy, Flanders, and Holland they weren't likely to become very famous or popular. Any attempt to be in any way different from them in ideas and styles was frowned upon.

But there was one man who spent all his life trying to show these narrow-minded men how stupid they were. He was William Hogarth (1697-1764). He painted portraits, of course, but he is better known for his 'story' pictures, which give us such wonderful glimpses of eighteenth-century English life. Breughel showed us the gaiety and the folly of his people and time, and he pokes fun at the failings of his fellow-creatures. Hogarth, who also had a sense of humour (perhaps a trifle bitter at times), tells us all about the evils that existed in his day. His pictures are sermons in paint denouncing the follies of gambling,

drinking, and the cruelty of men towards each other. But no matter how unpleasant the story might be or however indignant he felt about it, he never forgot that he was an artist first and a preacher after, and even his most unpleasant subjects were beautifully painted. He emphasized the beauty of goodness by showing the tragedy of evil.

The most important thing to remember about Hogarth's work is that it was new in ideas, if not in treatment. There had been books written and sermons preached against evil, but no



181. HOGARTH : *Shortly after Marriage*
National Gallery.

one had ever thought of painting pictures about it. This reason alone is enough to make Hogarth stand out boldly against the background of his century.

Each one of his pictures is a wonderful historical document, but they all tell us almost too much of the story. Half the pleasure in looking at a picture is in wondering why certain objects are put in and trying to discover their meanings. We like finding out things for ourselves and filling in odd gaps in the story. But Hogarth does not allow us to play guessing-games with his pictures.

Everything he considered essential to the story is there. Each gesture, expression, attitude, and movement, even the placing

of the furniture and the pictures on the walls, links up with others, to make the story complete from beginning to end. We read, learn, and appreciate the lesson he teaches, but we cannot make much use of our imagination.

This detailed thoroughness is seen in his *Shortly after Marriage*, one of a series of pictures called *Marriage à la Mode*, which tells us all about a young man who, after marrying a pretty and wealthy young lady, gambles away their fortune and dies in abject poverty. Playing-cards strewn on the floor, card-tables, an overturned chair, the burned-out candles in the chandelier, all tell us that the young couple, now very tired, have been enjoying an all-night party with their friends. The family steward raises his eyes in despair as he walks away with his hands full of unpaid bills. Obviously his young master has told him not to bother him with such matters so early in the morning. The air of luxury and wealth created by the marble pillars, the pictures on the walls, the fine clothes of the husband and wife, contrasts vividly with the expression on the face of the steward, who clearly foresees where all this extravagance is leading.



182. HOGARTH : *The Shrimp Girl*

National Gallery

Hogarth was also a fine portrait-painter, not caring much for the silks and laces of the rich, but preferring to paint his servants or working-people, even when dressed in their shabbiest clothes. *The Shrimp Girl* is one of his best portraits. It is probably only a rough sketch for a more detailed and more finished picture which he intended doing later. But I wonder if he could have given the final picture all the cheerful life and alertness shown in this simple sketch? Quite often, as any artist will tell you,

a rough drawing hurriedly made has more life, expression, and movement in it than the final highly finished picture.

In Hogarth's time portrait-painting was the only branch of English art that seemed to have any life and vigour. Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-92) was acclaimed as the greatest portrait-painter and colourist in England, and not even the Continent could produce anyone to compare with him. Artists were expected to flatter their subjects, and the society of eighteenth-century England could always rely upon Reynolds to give them



183. REYNOLDS : *Miss Bowles*
Wallace Collection.

portraits full of elegance, grace, and dignity. His success in this field led to his being elected the first President of the Royal Academy when it was founded in 1768.

As well as providing a well-painted likeness of his subject, he always tried to make his portrait something more than just a picture of a face by introducing a background or surroundings or some other details that were pleasing to the eye and the imagination, and at the same time giving some idea of the character and nature of the sitter.

Velasquez showed a great interest in the clothes of the children he painted, and the Infanta Margarita looks as if she had paused for a moment on her way across a room to say, "How do you like my dress?" The little girl in the picture here, however, looks as if she is posing in front of a camera. One can imagine Reynolds saying, "Now, sit like this, Miss Bowles, if you please. Hold your head up—so. Now put your arms round your doggie's neck like this!" and not starting work until she had assumed the pose he required. She seems quite aware of the importance of being painted by such a great man, and she makes a very nice picture of a little girl fondly caressing her pet. It is

full of charm and touching tenderness, and the presence of the dog (the 'extra' that makes this picture more than just a portrait of a girl) gives it a greater appeal.

Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88), however, did not like a posed portrait. He didn't really like portraits at all, but preferred to paint landscapes rather than pictures of well-bred young ladies dressed up as legendary characters and goddesses, which seems to have been a fashionable idea in Society in those days. Although he was the best English landscape-painter until the arrival of Turner and Constable, he found that not many people wanted landscapes, and he had to paint portraits to earn a living.

Even in these he manages to show his love of Nature, for he makes his backgrounds delightful with trees and hills and cattle. The work of Rubens was his guide in landscape-painting, while the elegance of his figures reveals the influence of van Dyck.

He and Reynolds were friendly rivals, and they once had an argument about the use of blue in pictures, Reynolds saying that a mass of this colour would look bad. Thereupon Gainsborough painted his *Blue Boy*, which is nearly all blue. It proved to be a very fine picture, and nothing wrong could be found with its colour-scheme. As a portraitist Gainsborough shows more imagination than Reynolds, and his work is fresher and not so laboured as that of his rival.

Our next artist, William Blake (1757-1827), is remembered as much to-day for his poems as for his pictures. It is difficult to describe the man or his work, for both are far beyond our



184. GAINSBOROUGH : *The Blue Boy*
Huntington Collection, California, U.S.A.

complete understanding. His pictures are as full of mysticism as El Greco's, and his imagination appears to have known no limits. His sombre colours of blue and dull red with patches of yellow seem unearthly and weird. He was a religious man, although his religion was a mixture of Christianity and some very peculiar and strange beliefs of his own invention. He lived in a world of his own creation, a world peopled by visions.



185. BLAKE : *The Ancient of Days*
Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester.

When he was a child his father once threatened to thrash him for telling lies when he said that he had seen angels in a tree.

He saw such a vision once at the top of the stairs in his house at Lambeth, of an old man bending down from the sky and measuring the earth with a compass. He made a picture of this old man, and called it *The Ancient of Days*. It is a muscular, bearded figure which reminds us of God in *The Creation of Adam* by Michelangelo, whom Blake greatly admired. Fantastic, dream-like, and distorted in its unnatural pose, the figure has a

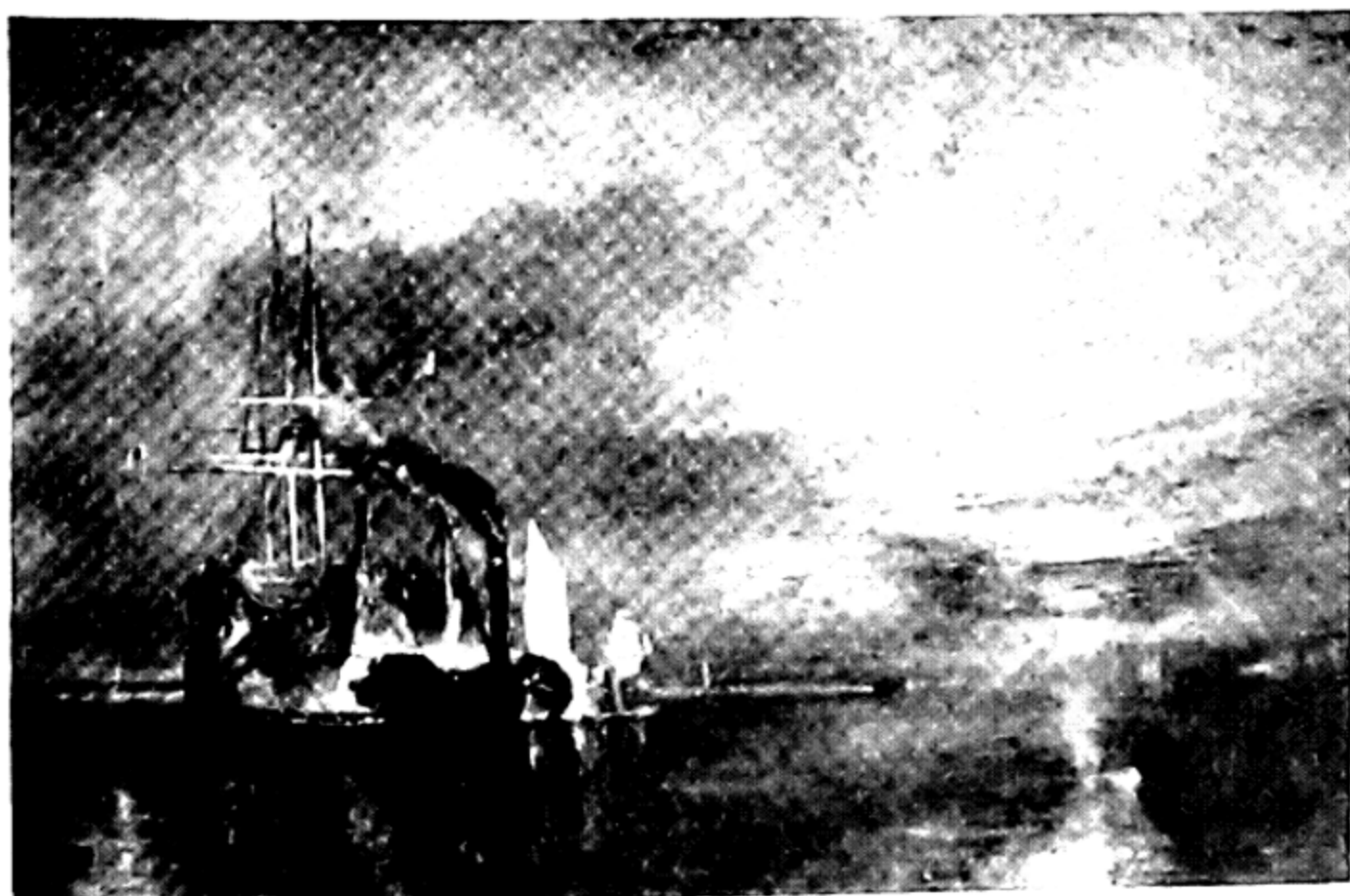
haunting quality that lingers in our minds. He was so absorbed in his visions that he would not draw his figures from life, nor did he care very much about their accuracy. All his strange and rather disturbing figures were products of a mind that, to us, may appear to have been a little peculiar. People said that he was mad, but how far away from madness is genius?

When an artist, during a great storm at sea, has himself tied to the mast of a ship so that he can safely study the heaving of the water, the rearing of the spray, and the clouds racing across the sky, we can be sure that he took his painting very seriously. It is no wonder, therefore, that William Turner (1775-1851)

could paint swirling seas, frothing foam, and damp mist in a way that no one has yet learned to understand. Like Claude, whom he studied in his earlier years, he became engrossed in the rendering of light and shade, but he surpassed Claude with his wonderful effects of heat-filled skies and dazzling sunrises. Claude's pictures are calm and smooth, Turner's full of movement and clear, transparent light.

He was truly a giant among landscape-painters, presenting Nature in every mood, from peaceful hills and pale, calm skies to storm-tossed seas and thundery, wind-torn clouds.

The Fighting Téméraire is one of his best-loved pictures. The



186. TURNER : *The Fighting Téméraire*
National Gallery.

old battleship, a warrior of Trafalgar, being towed away to be broken up, rides beneath a sky in which Turner has displayed all his mastery of effects. Ghost-like, the ship looms up out of a glassy sea, the light of the moon whitening her masts and hull. To the west the sun sets in a fiery blaze, its last glow like a banner hung out in farewell tribute to the old ship, and all is still and at peace as the tug smokes its way homeward.

The pictures of John Constable (1776-1837), one of the greatest of our landscape-painters, are quieter and not so exciting as Turner's. He painted the English countryside as only an Englishman in love with his country and even its climate could paint it—with understanding, skill, and beauty. How familiar his scenes are to us ! We too have seen, as he has painted them,

the rain-filled clouds scudding across the sky, trailing deep shadows over field and meadows, leaves of trees wet with dew or raindrops, sparkling and trembling in the sunlight ; the heat of a summer's day quivering above golden cornfields ; cattle, half asleep, standing knee-deep in placid green pools. His pictures are full of light, fresh air, and soft breezes, of silence and peace. By using paint very thickly so that it dried in hard ridges which catch the light, he created a feeling of depth and movement and a brilliance that seems to vibrate.

He never gave his pictures useless titles merely to escape



187. CONSTABLE : *The Haywain*
National Gallery.

being known purely as a landscape artist, neither did he give people all they expected in a picture. It was thought then that a landscape should be painted in different shades of brown—brown trees, brown leaves, brown and gold in the foreground, brown earth, even brown in the sky, and the distant background should be in pale tints of blue. Such a colour-scheme was imagined to make a picture look old, because an oil-painting tends to fade and go brown with age.

Constable rebelled against this stupid idea. Trees were sometimes green, grey, or red ; leaves often green or yellow ; clouds were grey or pink ; earth grey, golden, or red ; shadows purple or deep blue. So why not paint them in these natural colours ? When we look at *The Haywain* we can be thankful

that he did so. Patches of sunlight gleam on the distant meadow ; clouds drift lazily overhead. Our eyes wander along the river and pause to look up at the old mill sheltered by trees. . . . Imagine such a glorious picture painted in no other colour but brown !

We find ourselves now well into the nineteenth century, and before we leave the English painters to see the work of Spain and France we must have a look at the work of a most interesting little group of artists who tried to bring about a revolution in English painting.

This band of artists, which thrived from 1848-53, became known as the Pre-Raphaclite Brotherhood, and it raised its voice in protest against the painting of its time. The Brothers said that it was too full of unpleasant and artificial tricks and mannerisms, which had grown worse and worse and cluttered up painting ever since the time of Raphael. Somewhere, they said, art had gone wrong, and they blamed Raphael for starting all this trouble. If he and his followers had not so idealized nature, but had been more truthful about it, and had paid more attention to reality and less to beauty, then painting would not have got into such a sorry state.

So they set about trying to recapture the purer styles of painting of the fifteenth century, going back to the days before Raphael, when artists were good, honest craftsmen, believed in God, and did not seek worldly wealth. That does not mean that the Brotherhood copied or imitated the pictures of those olden days. They wanted to revive the old ways of thinking and the spirit of truthfulness. They read the Bible with devoutness, trying to see how those old painters had understood it, and to see if they too could tell the same stories as sincerely and as simply.

They produced some quite remarkable pictures, drawing their figures from life and not from memory. They were very particular with every detail. In fact, they became so very careful about even the most unimportant things, and so very anxious to remain true to Nature, that they allowed this carefulness to become a mania with them. We know that artists once were apt to lose sight of their *story* in their love of detail, but the Pre-Raphaclites lost sight of their *picture* because they thought *too much* about the story, putting in a number of unnecessary details to make it more convincing. They failed to bear in

mind that an artist must always think of what his picture will look like when it is finished.

Only one picture is shown here to give some idea of what the Brotherhood produced. It is called *Work*, by Ford Madox Brown (1821-93), and it well shows the thoroughness with which he, like the other Brothers, painted every detail of his scenes. Nothing is scamped, nothing done half-heartedly. There is no need for me to explain anything, because every part of the picture explains itself. It is almost too perfect, and



188, FORD MADOX BROWN : *Work*

Manchester Art Gallery.

so much like a photograph. Unfortunately for these gallant reformers, the camera had been invented about this time, and such fine detailed work was no longer necessary. A camera could do this work so much more easily, quickly, and cheaply.

Much as they studied the painters before Raphael, the Brothers failed to discover the secrets of the art that lay hidden in their pictures. They produced fine pictures themselves, but a fine picture is not always a fine work of art. We can admire their patient efforts, marvel at their extreme carefulness, but their pictures do not remain long in our memories, as great works should. They imagined that, by going back in time, they were showing a defiance of their age of smoking chimneys,

machinery, and the greed for wealth, all of which they hated and despised. But it is impossible to recapture the spirit, thoughts, and ideals of a bygone age. Art must always go forward; it cannot go back and try to do something which has been done before. The Pre-Raphaelites, brave and sincere though they were in their attempts to reform painting, found themselves in a blind alley which led nowhere. Their work, though it created a stir when painted, has left no lasting mark on English painting.

We close this chapter, which has so far dealt only with English painting, with a quick visit to Spain and France.

In the front rank of Spanish painting, side by side with El Greco and Velasquez, stands Francisco Goya (1746-1828), whose work brought about a revival of Spanish painting, which had become very poor after the death of Velasquez. Goya was an artist who had an intense pity and deep sympathy for his fellow-countrymen. He never tried to hide his feelings of anger and disgust about war and its horrors and all other causes of human suffering. In this respect we can liken him to Hogarth, but his emotions are more violently displayed, and his work is more forceful and biting.

He could be cruel, gentle, brutal, tender, coarse, refined, and all these things he shows in his work. Caring nothing for the rules or finer niceties of painting, he painted in his own way, saying exactly what he thought, and using every ounce of his imagination with every subject. Even his methods of painting outraged all the laws, for he used a dishcloth, sponge, or stick of wood, or even his thumb, as often as he used a brush. Fearing



189. GOYA: *Queen Louise*
From *The Family of Charles IV.*
Prado, Madrid.

no one, he expressed his opinions of people so frankly at times that his audacity leaves us gasping.

He was Court Painter, and, of course, he painted pictures of the King and his family. But how he got away scot-free with the insults he hurled at them is beyond our understanding. At first glance these royal pictures seem like any others, and it is not until we look closely into them and study the faces that we see the bitterness and contempt the artist felt for the royal family. How stupid, ill-bred, and coarse they look! Goya strips



199. GOYA: *Doña Isabel Cobos de Porcel*
National Gallery.

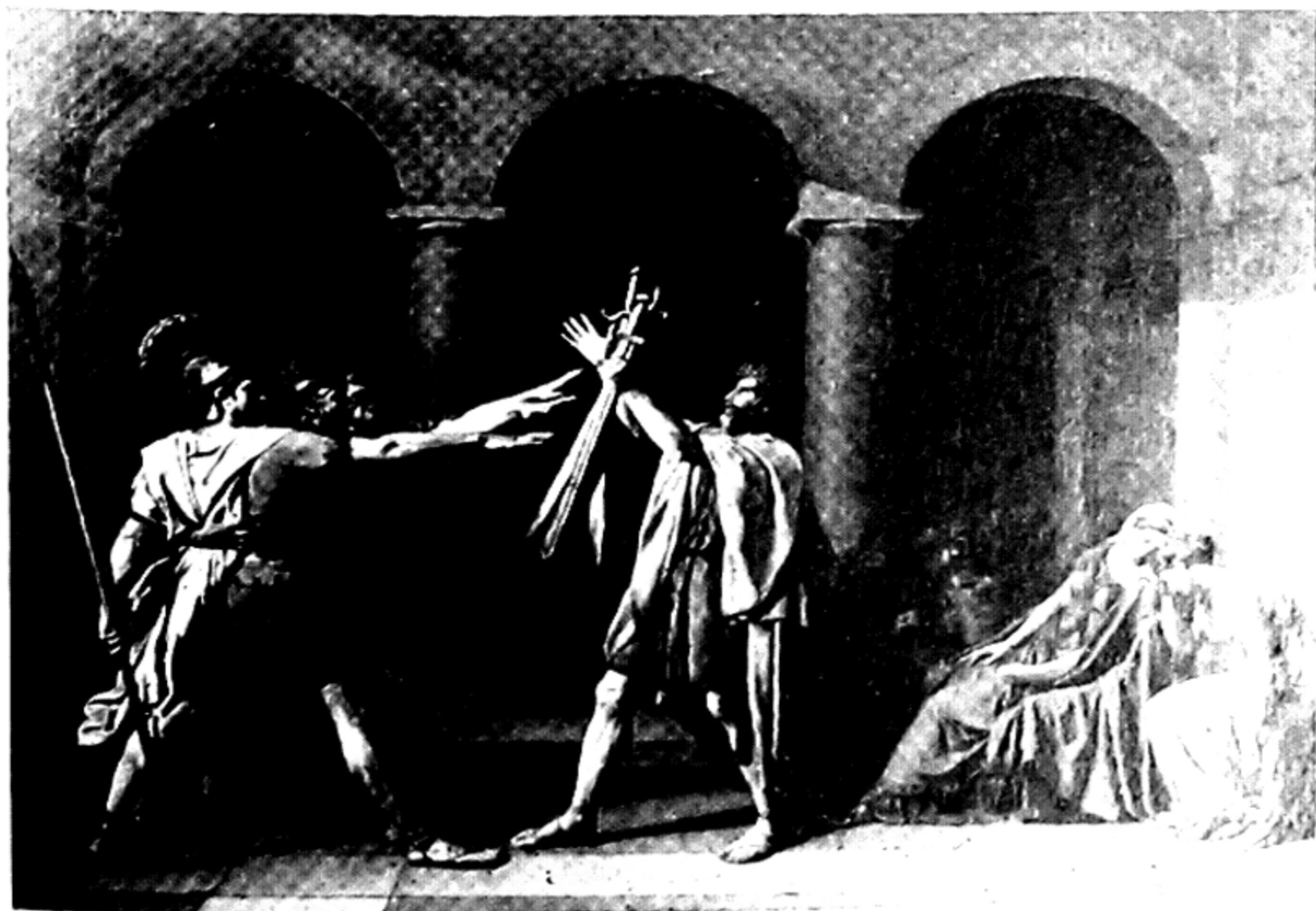
them of their masks and brings to light their cunning, slyness, idiocy, and falseness, summing up in the picture all the hypocrisy and corruption that reigned in their Court. Some one, commenting on one of these pictures soon after it was painted, said that they looked like a grocer's family! And Goya did all this so deliberately, with such malicious enjoyment, and with perhaps a certain amount of exaggeration. The King and his family must have been stupid indeed not to have seen that Goya was mocking them and holding them up to ridicule.

What a stormy man he was! Swayed by his temper, which was as violent and bitter as his pictures, he spoke loudly in his work against the terrible waste and suffering of war. Not for him the calm and noble dignity of Velasquez' *The Surrender of Breda*. He visited the battlefields and the prisons, anywhere where people suffered, and many of his pictures are horrifying in the agony and cruelty they depict. Yet in his calmer moods he could produce some lovely portraits, like that of *Doña Isabel Cobos de Porcel*, in which he shows all the charm and vivacity of an aristocratic Spanish lady.

In France we find that Watteau's fine ladies and gentlemen

have, alas, ended their gay lives on the guillotine during the French Revolution.

A great supporter of the Revolution was Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), a man whose cold and hard nature is revealed in so much of his work. He hated the aristocratic art of Watteau, and wished to improve, purify, and simplify it. To him it was outdated, a sign of decadence. He wanted to return to the pure style of the ancient Greeks, and his efforts to do so make his work seem very statuesque and cold, bold but empty of all human feeling, as you can see in *The Oath of*



191. DAVID : *The Oath of the Horatii*
Paris.

the Horatii. He had no love of Nature to soften him, and although he painted one landscape, you will see no trees in any of his other pictures. His art well expresses the aims of the Revolution, which produced little beyond barrenness and lack of any human sympathy and understanding, replacing refinement with cruelty and arrogance.

Large and splendid historical scenes poured from his brush, pictures not only of events of his country's past history, but also of those his countrymen could remember taking part in, all calculated to stir them with pride and urge them to fight to keep the precious freedom they had won so dearly. In his

portrait of *Madame Récamier*, however, he shows a more gracious and human side of his nature. The severity and simplicity of her Greek dress, with its neat, sculptured folds, the hard couch, and the cold colours all show how hard he was trying to force French art into firm and clearly cut forms. And that is where he went wrong, for art cannot be controlled by set rules or made up of certain things like a doctor's prescription. It must be as free as a man's thoughts.

He was a great artist, who might have been greater had he been less anxious to please his patrons, among whom, of course, was his hero Napoleon. When an artist does this his work and



192. DAVID : *Madame Récamier*
Louvre.

imagination suffer, and David's imagination was never one of his strong points. We can admire his precise work, but we can never fall in love with it.

A pupil of David was Jean Ingres (1780-1867), a portrait-painter of some distinction. The modelling of his figures is beautiful, but his sense of colour was not very good. Fortunately, he realized this, and, possibly to excuse this lack of a most necessary gift for any artist, he often said that a thing well-drawn was always well enough painted. This is not exactly true, because no amount of good drawing will make a good picture if the painting is bad, any more than skilful painting will hide a weak drawing.

Nevertheless, Ingres gained a great reputation as a draughts-

man, and all his pencil-portraits are much better than those he painted. He was a patient, hard-working man, who, however, suffered from a poor imagination. Yet he became one of the legendary figures of the French School, and his strong personality helped him to the top of the ladder of fame. He received many honours from a country that often admires a man more for his personal charm than for his genius. His hero was Raphael, and he worshipped the Greeks, sharing this love with his master, David. He comes somewhere between his master and Watteau, being neither quite so strongly classic in style as David nor so much of a romantic as Watteau.

193. INGRES : *Joan of Arc*

Louvre.

His *Joan of Arc* comes very close in its simplicity and treatment to the Italian masters, but it has none of their glorious colour. Not only are the colours and tones cold, but his figures lack feeling. They are creatures without life, immovable and unmoving. In spite of its weaker points as a painting, however, no one can be blind to its faultless drawing.

I7. *Revivals and Imitations*

THE end of the eighteenth century in England might well be called the Age of Discomfort as far as architecture was concerned. Many large houses had been built, all very rich-looking with their elaborate, heavy ornaments, balustrades, large windows, and porticoes. Magnificent to look at, but not very comfortable to live in, unless there were a large number of servants to look after them. The vast rooms, in spite of their large fireplaces, were difficult to keep warm, and a piping-hot



194. A GEORGIAN COUNTRY HOUSE

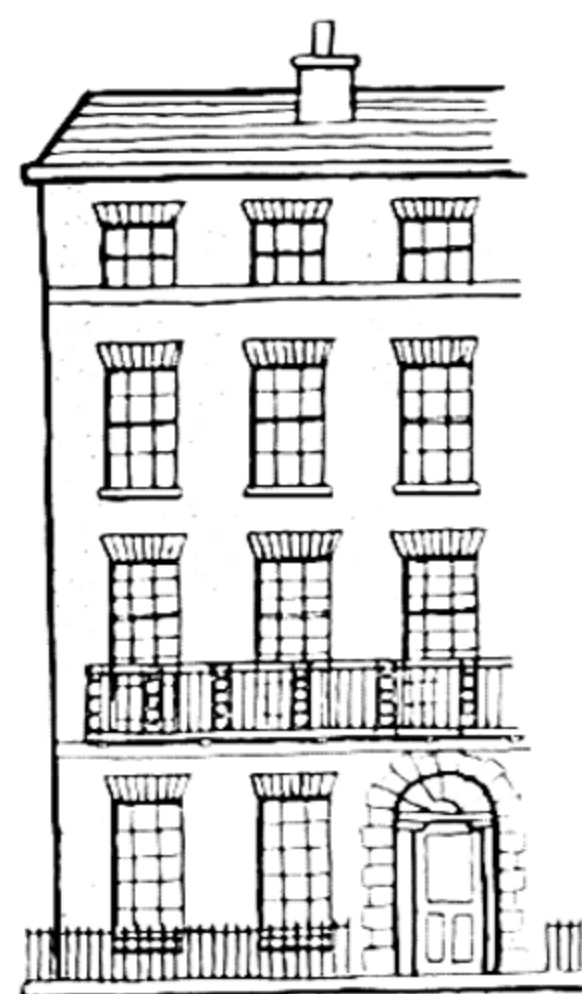
meal could be quite cool by the time it reached the dining-room, because the servants had to carry it along draughty, lofty corridors and passages from the kitchens, which might be more than

a hundred and eighty feet away. One wealthy man had such a house built for him. He was very proud of it, but he couldn't live in it. It was too big, too cold, too uncomfortable. So he lodged in a smaller house near by, and contented himself with gazing out of the windows at his empty mansion with its closed doors.

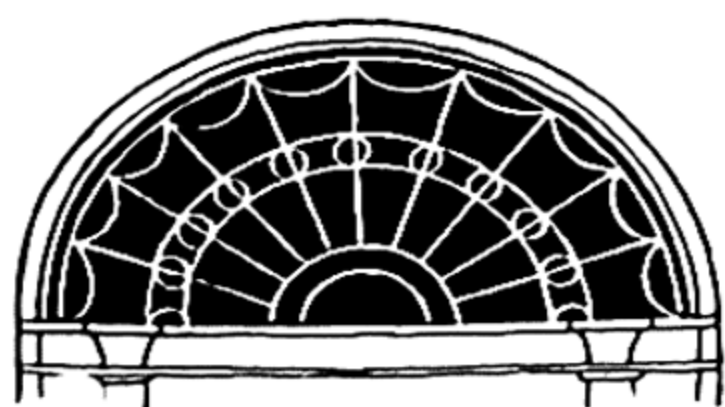
But another style was coming into being at this time, a style that had none of the splendour of these larger houses. The *Georgian* house is simpler, quieter, yet dignified in appearance. No doubt most of you have seen in some of our towns these pleasant, mellow-bricked houses with their white-painted sash-windows, built in beautiful curving crescents, straight avenues, or fine, big squares with large gardens in the middle of them.

A Georgian town house is usually four storeys high, and it is by its windows that we recognize it. The ground floor has fairly short windows, to give a feeling of strength and solidity, and above them the first-floor windows are taller, adding a

touch of grandeur to the plain exterior. Above these are shorter ones again, while at the top the windows are perfectly square. The front doors vary in design, and most of them are delicately panelled and have a semicircular 'spider's-web' fanlight over them. Some have a flat porch, classic in design, with wood pillars supporting it. Other features of these houses are the wrought-iron balconies and railings and fascinating cone-shaped extinguishers by the front door (p. 178). Into these the link-men, after escorting my lady's sedan-chair through the unlighted streets, used to thrust their flaming torches, called links, to put them out. We must not pass by the charming Georgian shop-fronts, with their square-paned bowed windows. How much more they invite us to peer into them than the present-day chromium and glass-brick affairs with their glaring neon signs!



195. A GEORGIAN TOWN HOUSE

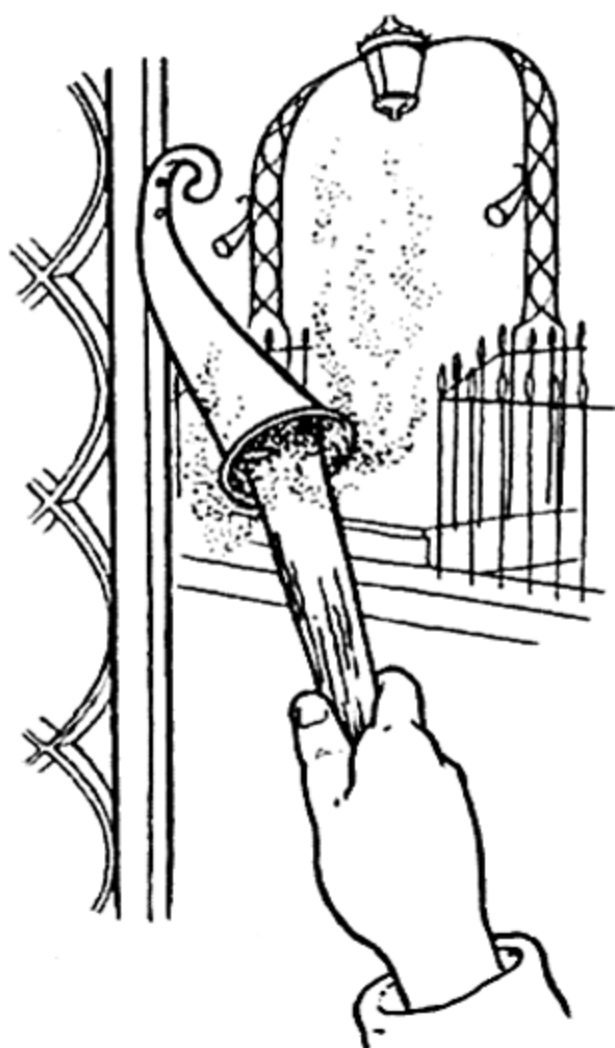


196. SPIDER'S-WEB WINDOW

These houses may seem all very much alike on the outside, even dull and monotonous, but it is their simplicity and sameness that appeal to us. They speak of a more leisurely and graceful age, when men had time to think about what they were doing, and speed simply had no importance. Yet though they appear outwardly dull, the interiors are brilliantly decorated with painted and panelled ceilings and ornamented chimney-pieces.

It was Robert Adam (1728-92), famed for his interior decorations, who helped to prevent these houses becoming mere brick boxes with slate lids. In 1762 the buried city of Pompeii had been partially excavated, and the delicate paintings and decorations on the walls of its long-forgotten houses created quite a sensation among the builders and architectural designers. Robert Adam used some of these designs, and in his wrought-iron balconies, on ceilings and columns, and over the chimney-pieces you will see his Greek

honeysuckle pattern (p. 179). He also introduced other details to relieve the smooth flatness of these houses, such as a balcony



197. A LINK-EXTINGUISHER

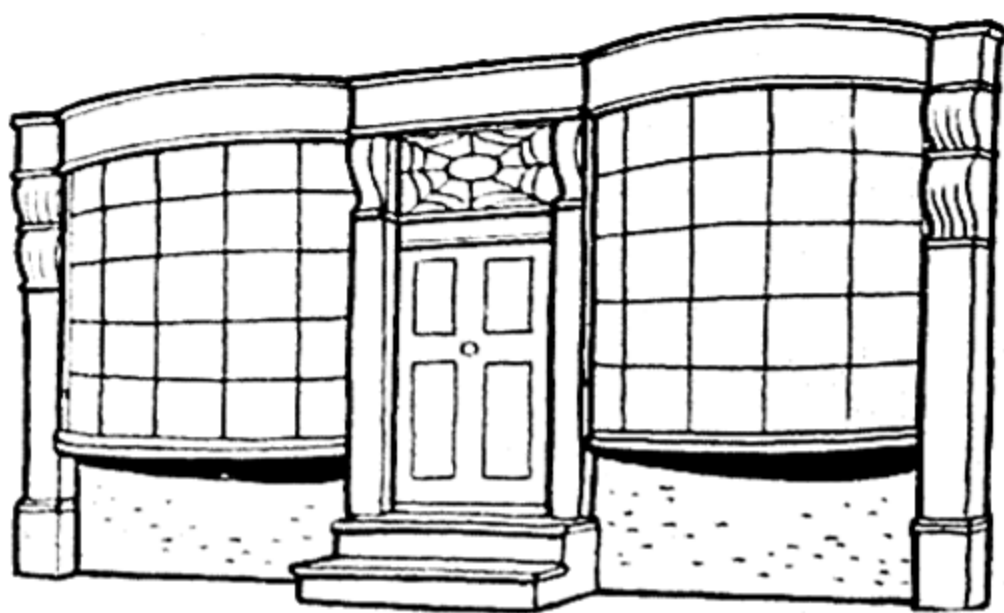
on one floor, a cornice on another, a pediment at the top, and between the windows pilasters with designs painted on them (p. 179).

One of his finest works, though on a much larger scale, was the reconstruction of *Syon House*, Isleworth (p. 180), in which he gave full rein to his skill in designing interiors of great splendour. Although it may seem a little overpowering, with its marble pillars, gleaming gilt and shining mirrors, beautiful brocades and painted ceilings, everything in each room harmonizes; nothing jars on us. Adam's was a style that was restrained, delicate, and simple even in its splendour. Not only did

he also designed the carved gilt chairs, the glass-topped tables, the silken couches, the ornate mirrors, and the carpets with patterns that matched the designs on the ceilings. Every detail was carefully thought out, planned, and drawn, and even the key-hole covers were treated as important items.

Back in 1750 many people were building houses in what they fondly imagined was a pure Gothic style. Horace Walpole, the son of our

first Prime Minister, disliked these feeble efforts. These houses, he said, weren't anything like Gothic at all, but hideous imitations. So he built *Strawberry Hill* (p. 180) in what he thought was true Gothic, striving to make it, with its steeples, pinnacles, turrets, and battlements, as much like a Gothic castle as possible. He was very thorough in his attempts to get back to the purity of the mediæval style, and he spared neither time,



198. GEORGIAN SHOP-FRONT

money, nor effort in collecting all the many details which would help to make his house look as he wanted it to. For one of his mantelpieces he copied a mediæval bishop's tomb, and the ceiling of his picture-gallery was vaulted in imitation of that of Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey.

When it was finished it looked very nice—to Horace Walpole. But like all those others who have tried to recapture the past, he simply had no idea of how to use all the different features properly, and nowadays his delicate screens, fan-vaulting, and all the other mock-Gothic effects seem as absurd to us as those he so roundly condemned in other houses.



199. A ROBERT ADAM HOUSE

In the early nineteenth century this desire for a return to Gothic architecture grew and grew. Many books were written then which had a strong romantic flavour. Men like Sir Walter Scott looked back to the days of bold knights and fair ladies, of jousts and tournaments, when chivalry was the hall-mark of a gentleman. They wrote about haunted, ruined castles, forsaken abbeys, of owls screeching around ivy-clad towers, of gloomy dungeons, of shadowy figures gliding along secret passages. How exciting and how very romantic these stories were, and how they made people dream of those far-off, colourful days!



200. HONEYSUCKLE ORNAMENT

They began to study the arts not of ancient Greece and Rome, but of the Middle Ages. They wanted now not the heavy buildings of the Renaissance, but the gracefulness of Gothic architecture. For some time it had

been a fashion for the wealthy to have in their large gardens a summer-house built to look like a small classical temple. Now they wanted imitation Gothic ruins—a crumbling



201. SYON HOUSE

archway or a broken tower covered with ivy. Decay and sadness were the effects they wanted, and to help create the right atmosphere they even planted dead trees around these mock ruins! Baronial castles or cottages that looked romantic were much in demand.

In 1801 Lord Elgin brought to England some of the sculptures from the Parthenon, and these created a great interest in Greek



202. STRAWBERRY HILL

art and architecture. So began what has been called the Battle of the Styles. Some wanted Gothic, others Greek buildings. And it is a battle which still goes on to-day, though in a much milder form. Up to this time styles had changed with men's ways of thinking and living, as they have done all through the history of building, but only one was in use at a time. But the architecture of the nineteenth century was of no particular style. It consisted merely of a going back in time and copying the buildings of the past.

Gradually these two styles settled down together, strange companions indeed, but each apparently content with its lot.



203. ". . . DECAY AND SADNESS "

Gothic was used mainly for schools, churches, vicarages, and other places of ecclesiastical or educational purposes, while most of the business-houses, museums, and similar buildings were in the classical style.

Some of the larger houses, like *Toddington Manor*, in Gloucestershire, built by Sir Charles Barry in 1829, were made to look like mediæval monasteries. Some of these were even called



204. TODDINGTON MANOR

abbeys, although they were private dwellings. Windsor Castle was partially rebuilt and fitted with battlements and turrets to make it look more like a mediæval fortress. The *British Museum*,

built between 1823 and 1847, with its colonnades and porticoes, is a good copy of a Greek temple. Although Gothic was still the most favoured style for churches, there were some that bore a distinctly Greek appearance. St Pancras church in London, impressive with its rows of Corinthian columns, has a porch supported by *caryatids* (figures of maidens bearing the roof on their heads) which was copied direct from the Erectheion in Athens.

People were travelling about the Continent and the East a great deal in those days, and they brought back with them



205. THE BRITISH MUSEUM

drawings of buildings they had seen and admired on their journeys. What a strange growth of houses sprang up then! Swiss chalets, Indian bungalows, Chinese pagodas—every type of house that was most unsuitable to our landscape and our climate. These freak buildings appealed to a few, but the Gothic style remained the favourite. It invaded even the designing of furniture, so that stools, tables, backs of chairs, and doors of bookcases had a definitely Gothic look about them.

Having experimented successfully with Toddington Manor, Sir Charles Barry began to rebuild the Houses of Parliament in 1835, with Augustus Pugin in charge of all the interior and outer decorations. It was essential that the new seat of government should be in a style in keeping with its near and older neighbours, Westminster Abbey and Westminster Hall. So Barry decided to build in the Perpendicular form of Gothic.

With its pinnacles and magnificent tower, it is the most impressive building of the Gothic revival, and it blends well with the older buildings close by. Pugin, one of the keenest supporters of the Gothic revival, insisted that all the statues of kings and queens that adorned the outside of the building, even that of Queen Victoria, should be dressed in Tudor costume. He

carried his Gothic taste into the designing of the interior fittings, furnishings, and decorations, and even the umbrella-stands were Gothic in design. (Does this make you think of a smartly dressed gentleman of the fifteenth century clad in gaily coloured doublet and hose and carrying an umbrella?)



206. A CARYATID

By the time Queen Victoria had come to the throne in 1837 the classic style had lost its hold, and the interest in Gothic design spread more and more. The trouble was, however, that most of those who built in this style thought themselves true Gothic builders, but, like those of Walpole's time, they were really only very poor imitators. They used cast-iron pillars, cast-iron ribs and mouldings, and cement instead of stone. Not only were their materials inferior to those of the masters of the Middle Ages, but they simply did not understand the spirit, nor did they have the deep faith and inspiration, of those builders of the age of cathedrals. "Victorian Gothic" has been held up to scorn for many years.

This love for the Gothic was the cause of the spoiling of many of our oldest churches and cathedrals. A wave of restoration began. Ancient churches were rebuilt or partly renewed, and, in order to make the newer portions blend with the old, the ancient stone was scraped and smoothed until it looked neither old nor new. The Gothic builders had covered their inside walls with plaster to hide the bare stone, but the restorers stripped off this plaster. That was bad enough, but the real tragedy was



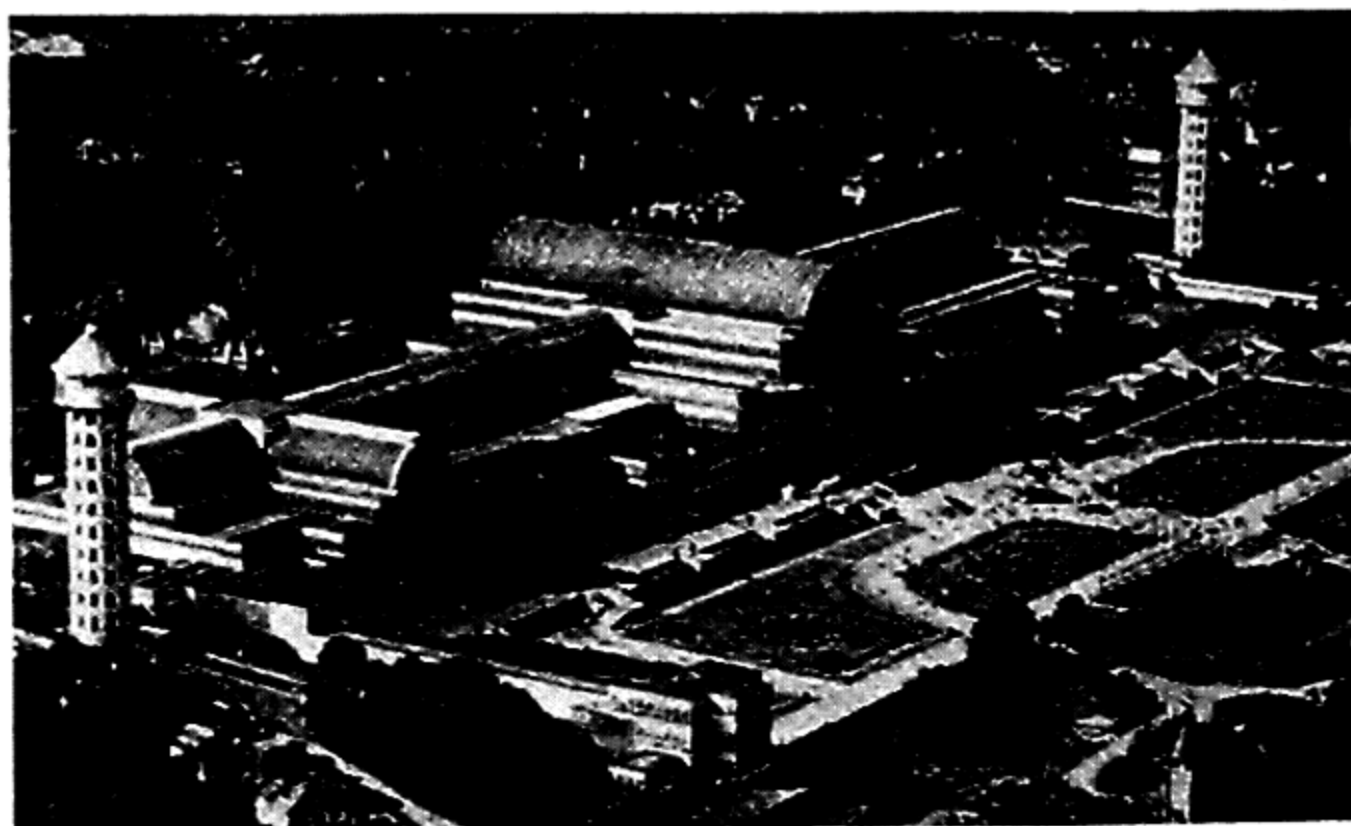
207. THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

that these plaster walls had some fine mediæval paintings on them, which, after the Reformation, had been covered over with whitewash. Consequently, the restorers, by removing the plaster, robbed us of some wonderful works of art.

By the middle of the

nineteenth century people had lost much of their interest in both Gothic and classic architecture. They wanted something entirely new, but no one seemed able to think of anything else to do. Then, in 1851, Sir Joseph Paxton built his wonder of the age, the *Crystal Palace*. This was first erected in Hyde Park to house the Great Exhibition. Later it was removed to the district in London which still bears its name, but no longer does the sun gleam on its curved glass roof, for the Palace was burned down in 1936.

You have all seen the pre-fabricated houses in our parks and



208. THE CRYSTAL PALACE

other open spaces, and when you first heard about them you probably thought that pre-fabrication was something new in building methods. All the parts—walls, roofs, windows, and so on—are made in sections in factories, carried to the chosen spot and there fixed together, and in a short time the house is ready for occupation. But the Crystal Palace was the very first pre-fabricated building. It was a tremendous undertaking for those days, and even to-day it would be no easy task. I don't know how many thousands of sheets of glass were used, but when it was finished it looked like a gigantic greenhouse.

The most astonishing thing about it, something entirely new in building, was that it was the very first building ever to have a cast-iron frame. Because sections of this frame and all the sheets of glass were made to certain sizes for putting together, the Crystal Palace took less than a year to erect. Naturally, such

speed with such a remarkable structure caused a great stir. Before then builders had laboriously laid stone on stone and brick on brick, and a large building took many years to erect. This, thought the builders, is the architecture of the future, and they settled down to think out ways to use this wonderful method.

But the excitement soon died down, because nobody wanted to live in a glass house, and no one knew quite how to make use of this splendid idea. The railway companies turned their eyes on it, and said that a huge glass roof over their stations would make a wonderful shed under which many trains and passengers could be sheltered. Although the use of glass was limited, the cast-iron frame had come to stay—for a time. To-day we use steel, and the first steel-framed building was erected in London in 1906.

Almost the last work of the Gothic revival was the *Albert Memorial*, by Sir Gilbert Scott. He built many churches, but this is probably his best-known work. Now, this memorial has caused many shudders and exclamations of horror. But when we study it carefully we find that it is not quite so bad as all that. For instance, the great frieze, with its eighty-four life-size figures of the world's greatest poets and artists, carved in high-relief in marble, is well-designed and shows great skill. It is plain that architect and sculptors worked closely together to produce this, to us, rather garish and cumbersome monument. We must bear in mind that it was quite in keeping with the tastes of that time. Our tastes change throughout the years, each generation having its own ideas about what is good and bad, and what I admire to-day you may dislike when you grow older. Anyway, it was highly praised when it was first put up. This, people



209. THE ALBERT MEMORIAL

said, was the most perfect and modern genius had produced.



210. A 'GREEK' RAILWAY STATION :
EUSTON, LONDON

elegant piece of art which ennobled London, one to be proudly shown to visitors from abroad. Well, whatever we may think of it to-day (and many people think it hideous and much too big), it pleased the Londoners of the late nineteenth century.

The Victorian era was one of great contrasts. Pomp and splendour lived side by side with appalling poverty and wretchedness. It was a time of great industrial expansion, and some

men became very rich very quickly. It is mainly due to these men and their pride in their wealth that Victorian architecture became such a medley of styles. They loved their fancy-dress buildings. Factories, railway-stations, schools, museums, churches, and blocks of offices were designed to look like French châteaux, Norman castles, Renaissance palaces, Greek temples, Eastern mosques, or Gothic abbeys. It is a pity that such a prosperous and peaceful age had nothing better to leave us than these weak imitations of nobler buildings. They are mostly ugly and ill-suited to their purposes, lacking in inspiration, sincerity, and good taste. Unfortunately, prosperity and good taste seldom go together.



211. A 'GOTHIC' RAILWAY STATION : ST
PANCAS, LONDON

18. Sculptors—and Some More Painters—of the Nineteenth Century

THIS chapter really begins with the end of the eighteenth century, when the excitement of Baroque sculpture had died down, apparently having tired itself out. At this time artists were looking for a style that was less boisterous, much calmer and quieter. There seemed to be only one thing to do, and that was to return to the ideals of the ancient Greeks and Romans. The Italian sculptor Antonio Canova (1757–1822), with his skill in portraying grace and beauty like that seen in his *Perseus*, which reminds us very much of Greek work, led sculpture away from the restlessness of the Baroque to what he thought were the final and highest standards of Greek art. This man had a great influence in his own country, and also in England, where his work encouraged the revival of classical sculpture.



212. CANOVA: Head of *Perseus*
Vatican.

All through the eighteenth century the carvers of France had been undisturbed by the extravagance of Baroque work, and although they too now wanted realism and beauty, they did not, as Canova had done, go back to Greece and Rome, but to the ideals of the Italian Renaissance. One of the greatest of them was Jean Houdon (1741–1828). On p. 188 is his portrait of *Voltaire*, the great French writer and philosopher. Even though we may not have read any of his books to help us to form an opinion of him, we can see from this bust that Voltaire was a man of



213. HOUDON : *Voltaire*
Paris.

great wit, perhaps possessing a certain charm, of keen intelligence, sarcastic, sharp-tongued, and outspoken. There is no attempt on Houdon's part to hide the man's character beneath a mask of idealism. Like all his portraits, this one is plain, straightforward, and natural, full of a truth and power which reveal the genius of both sculptor and writer.

Because artists had so often copied styles which had already lost their freshness sculpture after the Renaissance had become very dull and lifeless, but the vigorous and imaginative work of another

Frenchman, François Rude (1784-1855), put new life into sculpture.

As a boy he had lived through the turmoil of the French Revolution, and when he grew up he saw France becoming a great nation under the energetic leadership of Napoleon. His best-known work is *The Departure of the Volunteers*, carved in stone on the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, and it reflects the enthusiasm of all Frenchmen at that time. This work is also known as *The Marseillaise*, and the figures and attitudes of these grim, determined men catch the very spirit of the stirring tune of the French National Anthem, and of the freedom which they are setting out to fight for. It is one of the



214. RUDE : *The Departure of the Volunteers*

most vigorous and characteristic works of the nineteenth century by the first of the great modern masters of sculpture. Have you noticed that he has introduced a touch of classicism into it by dressing his soldiers in Roman armour?

After Rude there were, of course, quite a number of brilliant sculptors, but there were also some very poor ones whose works, acclaimed as masterpieces at the time, now seem very weak and ordinary, with their lack of great skill and imagination. The names of these artists are almost forgotten, but there is always one among such a crowd who will shine brighter than the others.



215. RODIN : *The Burghers of Calais*

Just as Michelangelo was the bright star in the Renaissance sky, so Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) was the shining light of nineteenth-century French sculpture. He was the giant of his age.

We have seen how often an artist who dares to be different from others has been rewarded with abuse and harsh criticism, and Rodin also had his share of jeers and condemnation, because his work seemed ugly and ridiculous to those who could not understand it. Nature is rugged, and, because he tried to copy Nature, many of Rodin's carvings are rugged, although much of his later work is smoother and softer. But, on the whole, he seems to have preferred a coarser style, with deep hollows and jagged edges, and he left a great deal to the imagination, a little

habit of his which enraged his critics, who could not understand why his work so often looked unfinished. Nor did they like flesh which didn't look smooth and silky like real flesh. In some instances a figure seems to be emerging from a block of stone or marble, and this did really bewilder them. In short, Rodin did not always give a complete picture with highly finished details, but an *impression* of a subject. Luckily for him there were some people who recognized his genius, and he became famous during his lifetime.

We have in London a copy of one of his most famous groups, *The Burghers of Calais*. The six figures remind us of the story of Calais, which, after a year's siege by Edward III, was driven by hunger to surrender. The English King agreed to spare the town if six of its most important burghers, or chief citizens, would bring him the key of the city. He intended to wreak his vengeance on the unfortunate men.

Gaunt and starved, tragic yet proud in their humiliation, they are prepared to sacrifice their lives for their fellow-citizens. Here you can see the ruggedness and realism of Rodin's work, a realism made more forceful by the rather ugly and extraordinarily large hands of some of the figures. Rodin has made light do a great deal towards increasing the feeling of drama in this great work, and the deep shadows between the folds of the garments give a movement to the group, a slow movement of dragging feet and weak bodies, which tells us how great their sufferings must have been.

There is nothing smooth or soft about these tragic figures, only a bald truthfulness that drives home to us the horror of the moment. It was said at the time that people were weary of statues that had nothing to say. This complaint surely could not be made about Rodin's figures, each of which lives and says a great deal that is worth saying.

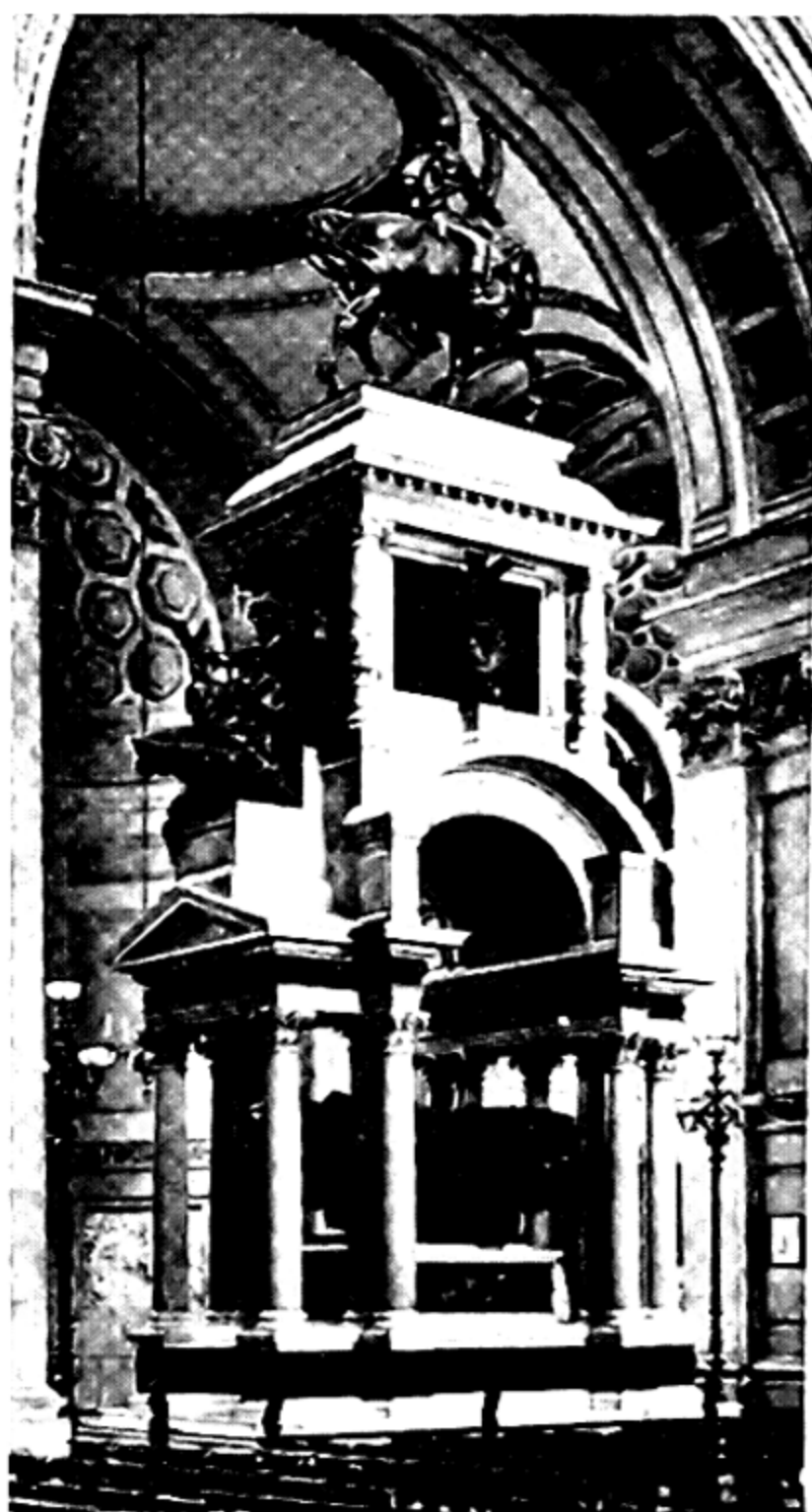
Each of these figures has a different and definite character. The central figure is an aged man who, with bowed head, is resigned to his fate. The bearer of the key walks sedately, his face worn and haggard with exhaustion and saddened by the fate of his beloved city. Behind him another, probably thinking of his wife and children whom he will never see again, momentarily gives way to despair and covers his head with his hands. Another looks back at the distant town, hesitating in his steps as he thinks of what lies before him. In front of them a man

raises his hand and seems to be encouraging his companion, who might be saying, "Why should we have to do this?" Three resolute men and three who are not quite so confident of themselves. Nevertheless, Rodin gives them all a strength of purpose and a fine heroism, and they move us by their air of sadness and calm dignity.

I expect you know that in answer to his wife Philippa's plea Edward spared the lives of these men, but he kept them in prison for a long time.

One man stands out among the English sculptors of this period, and he was Alfred Stevens (1818-75). He struggled all through his life to preserve his individuality as an artist, living and dying in poverty, unknown and his genius unrecognized. One of the finest works of English sculpture is his *Wellington Memorial* in St Paul's Cathedral. Beneath an arched canopy supported on delicate Corinthian columns lies the bronze figure of the great Duke. Sculptured groups of allegorical, or symbolical, figures decorate the upper part of the memorial, one depicting Truth tearing out the tongue of Falsehood, the other of Valour triumphing over Cowardice. It is one of the most impressive of English monuments, worthy of the great soldier it commemorates. Stevens died before it was finished, and his design was completed later by other hands. But the work he did himself—the effigy of the Duke, the sarcophagus on which it lies, and the two groups of figures—alone makes this memorial one of outstanding merit. The equestrian figure of the Duke surmounting the memorial was modelled later by John Tweed.

So much for sculpture. Now we turn to painting. I have



216. STEVENS: THE WELLINGTON MEMORIAL

St Paul's Cathedral.

said that Rodin often gave an impression of his subject rather than a highly finished representation, and this conveying of impressions of things and people also came into later nineteenth-century painting.

Some explanation should be given here as to what is meant by 'Impressionism' in painting. Imagine yourself walking along a busy street crowded with buses and cars and hordes of shoppers.



217. FRITH : *Derby Day* (detail)

Tate Gallery.

You cannot see all the scene at once. Your eyes can take in only one small incident at a time, but you know that all around you, unseen by you, other people are walking about, pausing at the kerb and looking both ways before crossing the road, standing about and talking or looking into shop-windows. You may see them as vague, indistinct shapes out of the corners of your eyes. In other words, you have the *impression* that much is going on around you which, of course, you do not see. That is the effect that painters were now trying to get into their pictures.

Artists had always given us minutely detailed pictures, like coloured photographs. In the picture *Derby Day*, by W. P. Frith (1819-1909), of which only a section is shown here, all the life of that great event is to be seen, every detail beautifully finished and clearly shown. The artist probably wandered about among the crowds making sketches of people and incidents, and then went back to his studio and arranged them all to make a fine picture. But is it a *truthful* picture? Did all these incidents occur just at the very spot and time he has shown? Obviously



218. MANET : *Bar at the Folies-Bergère*
National Gallery.

no one could have seen so much all at once and with such needle-sharp clearness. This was what artists were now turning against, and in France a body of men were producing pictures which aroused a great deal of interest and heated protest. How the critics sneered at them! They said that these artists were mad! All that these gentlemen saw were the thousands of brush strokes and big splashes of colour, and they failed completely to see beyond them to find out what the artists were trying to say. These pictures were nothing at all like the nicely finished domestic scenes or great historical events they were used to seeing. Even the portraits were not as they thought portraits should be. They liked to see trees in a picture with every leaf carefully drawn and

modelled, but all that these 'crazy' artists did was to spread the colour of the leaves in broad masses, giving an *impression* of dense foliage. These pictures, cried the critics, are not true representations of Nature; they're only impressions! And the painters became known as Impressionists.

Many of them had seen Turner's work, and they had admired his way of representing light in a picture. Light, to them, became the all-important part of a picture. They left their



219. DEGAS : *Ballet seen from an Opera-box*
Philadelphia.

studios to go and paint in the streets and the fields. They painted Nature in their own particular and peculiar way, *suggesting* shapes and colours as they saw them. But they carried their impressionism a little too far, and in their eagerness to paint things as they saw them they often painted them as no one ever can or ever will see them. Their pictures were very fresh-looking and full of beauty and vitality, with their lovely effects of meadows shining with dew or frost sparkling in the

sun, but too often they became messy and fuzzy in spite of their brilliance of colour.

Of this band of rebels Edouard Manet (1832-83) was one of the leaders. He was a fairly wealthy man who had no need to paint to earn his living, so he could afford to paint for the love of it. Because he considered everything, no matter how ordinary it was, a good thing to paint, every object in his pictures becomes vitally interesting. In his *Bar at the Folies-Bergère* even the beer-bottles are attractive, because he painted them just as he saw them, which was with a far more observant eye than you and I have. Of course, the colour is important in every picture, and the illustration here in black and white does not do complete justice to this work.

There is no soft or gradual shading, but strong contrasts of light and shade skilfully used to give his figures and objects firmness. "Light," he declared, "is the principal person in a picture," and he regarded colour and light as being more important than shapes.

The greatest draughtsman among the Impressionists was Edgar Degas (1834-1917), whose work has none of the fuzziness which was the weak part of all but the best Impressionist work. He made a special study of the ballet, sketching the dancers as



220. DEGAS : *The Two Laundresses*

Paris.

he saw them from the side of the stage, in their dressing-rooms, or practising in the ballet school. He did not care much whether the girls were pretty or not. He was interested only in their attitudes as they danced, or leaned forward to tie their shoes, noting their grouping and poise, and the play of light and shade on their bodies as they moved about or stood talking among themselves. He delighted in choosing the most difficult poses with difficult perspective, and yet his pictures do not seem awkward, but have a great charm and beauty.

The unusual viewpoints of his figures, some seen from above, others from ground-level, or over the shoulders of onlookers,

make some of his pictures look like parts of bigger pictures. This is clearly shown in his *Ballet seen from an Opera-box*. Only a part of the woman in the foreground is seen, and her stillness and the shadow in which she sits intensify the brilliant lighting of the stage and the whirling movement of the dancers. Although not a complete figure is seen, we yet have an impression of swift, light movement. It was Degas' love of unusual angles of vision that made his work so different from that of other painters. They



221. MONET : *Gare Saint-Lazare*

Paris.

have the effect of a snapshot photograph, and are also like those dramatic 'angle-shots' in a film.

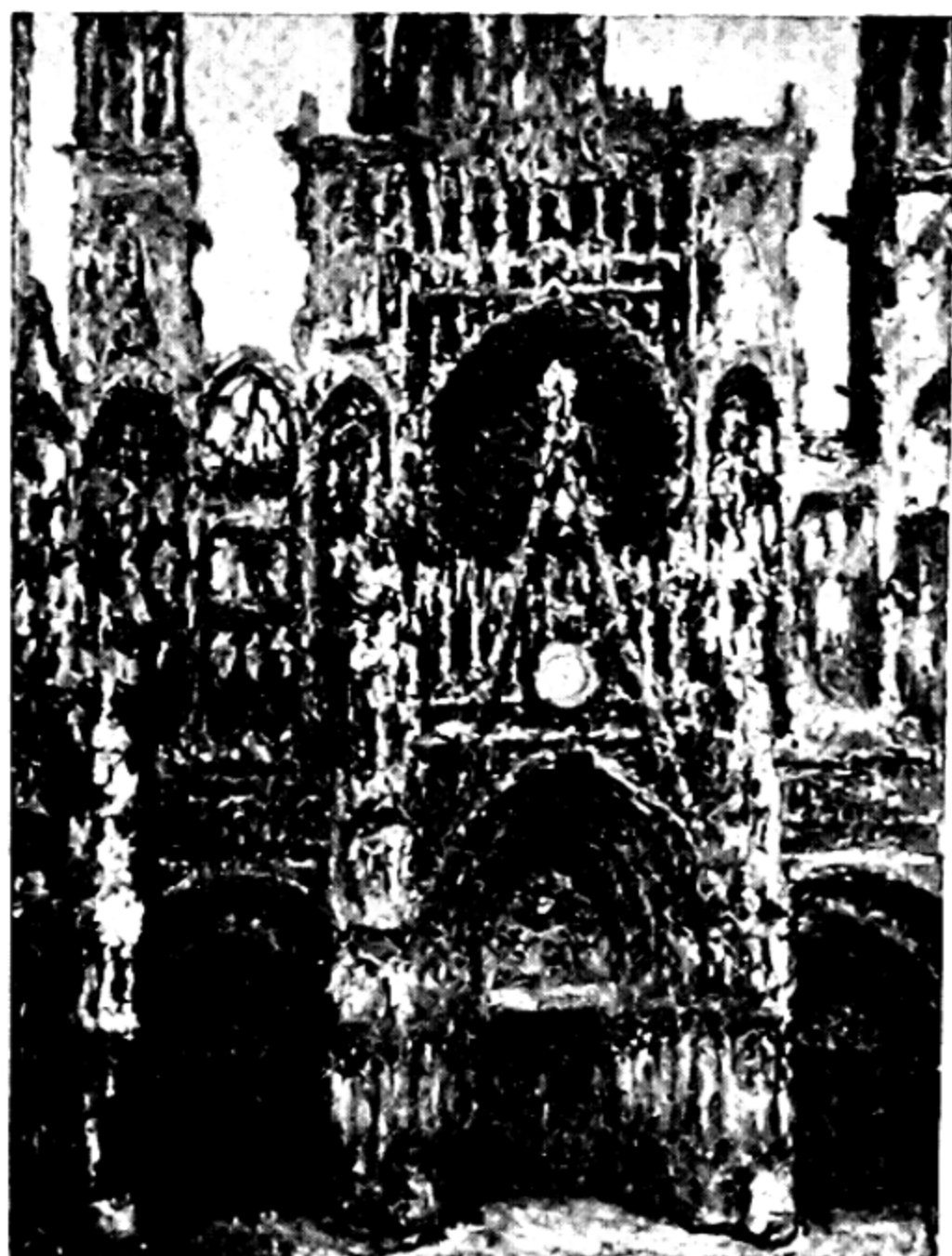
It is a pity that his ballet pictures seem to be the only ones by which he is remembered, for he was also a very fine portrait-painter, and his studies of circus life, café and racecourse scenes, are lively and colourful.

I expect you have often heard your mother say that one of the most boring and tiring tasks is ironing the weekly wash, and I am sure that the picture here will be fully understood and appreciated by her. Degas, in his *Two Launderesses*, shows how wearying this job can be. One woman yawns as she eases her aching back, while the other, even while she presses on the iron, seems to have paused to give herself a moment's rest from her

tedious work. The colouring also, mainly of shades of blue, helps to emphasize the monotony of their task.

After seeing Turner's pictures Claude Monet (1840-1926) became convinced that the wonderful effects of light and air were far more important in a picture than the subject itself. His *Gare Saint-Lazare* is a vivid impression of a very ordinary scene, which we see every day without paying much attention to it.

Clouds of steam, dirty railway-engines, and a sooty glass roof—who could make a fine picture of such a dingy and unattractive scene? Monet did. He wasn't particularly interested in trains, but only in the vague shapes they presented as they puffed their way through the steam and the dim light struggling through the grimy glass roof of the station. As in most Impressionist pictures, light plays a tremendous part in this painting. In fact, it is the only thing we really see. If it had been painted with every detail photographically finished the picture might have lost much of its reality and depth, and most of the effect of shimmering light would have disappeared.



222. MONET : *Rouen Cathedral*

Paris.

I have shown his *Rouen Cathedral* because it so well illustrates the fuzziness of Impressionist painting as a whole. All the details have been sketchily indicated, and the whole represents an impression of the building, as if it were being viewed through a rain-streaked window. This may help us to understand why the critics were so bewildered by this most unusual method of painting.

If you were asked to draw a picture of a wet day in town, do you think you could make a happy picture of it? A wet day is

seldom a cheerful one, but Auguste Renoir (1841-1919) could somehow bring cheerfulness into the most ordinary scene, and in his picture *The Umbrellas* he has chosen a wet spring morning in Paris. It seems to have just stopped raining, and one woman is closing her umbrella and is looking up at the sky hopefully. A gentleman in the background lifts up his open umbrella to



223. RENOIR: *The Umbrellas*

National Gallery.

avoid colliding with others. No one appears the least bit irritable or fed up with the weather. Renoir had a gift for picking out the brightness and happiness of even the most commonplace things, events, and people, and filling them with vivacious gestures and attitudes, charm and elegance. Many of his paintings seem very rough and sketchy, but that is because he did not overdraw the details, but indicated them sufficiently to tell the story, and the modelling of his figures is perfect.

Do you notice how the curves of the umbrellas are repeated all through the picture? The hoop and the round bonnets of

the children, the round-ended box on the woman's arm, carry the eyes from one curve to another, so that we gradually become aware of a movement of jogging umbrellas and jostling people.

By the time people had got used to Impressionist painting and were even beginning to like it it was already growing old-fashioned. Now they had to start getting used to the work of another School, which called itself Post-Impressionist, which means *after* Impressionism. The leader of this School was Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), who, like Degas, left the Impressionists

after a while because they did not pay enough attention to the solidity of the things they painted and the construction of their pictures was not always good.

He said that all things in Nature were based on geometrical forms—the cylinder, the cube, the cone, and the sphere. And you will see suggestions of these shapes in his landscapes and other pictures. Mountains and tall hills suggest the cone ; a tree or a human figure, the cylinder ; an apple, a sphere ; buildings are based on the cube. Beneath the ground in his



224. CÉZANNE : *Rocky Scene near Aix*

Tate Gallery.

landscapes, as in his *Rocky Scene near Aix*, is a hint of rocks showing the formation of the earth. Behind the faces of his portraits is clearly indicated the bony structure of the skull. By using flat areas of colour, called planes, of different shapes and sizes in lighter or darker tones, he created a new way of giving depth to his pictures. He was successful with this scheme because he kept it under control, but his followers carried it much further, and made these planes of colour look more like cubes, and they became known as Cubist painters. We shall be reading about Cubism in the next chapter.

One artist not only rebelled against Impressionism, but also

against the whole idea of European civilization. To Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) civilization wasn't a good thing for artists, and civilized painting wasn't worth looking at. Such a man must have been very sure of his beliefs, because he packed up all his things and went to live in Tahiti, in the South Seas. There he felt he was free to paint as he wished, and not have to trouble himself about the rules and traditions of civilized painting.

Whether his attitude was right or wrong matters little to us



225. GAUGUIN : *We Greet Thee, O Mary*

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

now, but it is fairly certain that if he had stayed in France we should never have seen the exotic paintings, full of tropical heat and strong sunlight, which he produced in his new home. They are nothing like anything we have seen before, although they may remind us a little of the brilliant decorative pictures of the Byzantines, with their rich colour and simple designs. There is not much feeling of depth in them. They are painted in broad, flat masses of violently contrasting colours, with

little suggestion of the third dimension, and a sense of distance is not apparent.

It may seem odd to see Our Lady as a dark-skinned native woman wearing a bright-red dress, with her Child perched on her shoulder. Even a dusky South Sea maiden as a yellow-winged angel may not seem quite right. But three hundred years earlier the Italian painters in their Biblical and scriptural pictures were dressing their Italian-looking Madonnas, saints, and apostles in the clothes of the sixteenth century and placing them among buildings and scenery typical of Italy at that period. And Gauguin does very much the same thing in his *We Greet*

Thee, O Mary. His characters are dark-skinned Tahitians clad in their gay and highly coloured native dress, standing in a scene typical of their exotic island. In the background purple hills loom against a sky of yellow streaked with blue. Brightly coloured tropical flowers and brilliant green foliage form a kind of flat, depthless backcloth to the figures. A purple road and a bright green foreground complete a picture that glows with light and heat and rich colour. To the people of Tahiti,



226. VAN GOGH : *The Bedroom*

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Laren.

among whom Gauguin lived, the picture must have seemed a very convincing and truthful one.

How would you like your bedroom to have pale-violet walls, lilac-coloured doors, a red floor, bright-yellow chairs, and a bed of the same colour, with light-greenish-yellow sheets and pillow with a scarlet cover over them, a green-framed window, and an orange table with a blue basin on it? Sounds rather startling, doesn't it? The colour scheme may not appeal to you, but if you were to see *The Bedroom*, by Vincent van Gogh (1853-90), in colour you would find it bright and very fresh and clean-looking, and not at all unattractive.

Van Gogh was a Dutchman who, for a time, was a missionary

among the poor miners of Belgium. He lived as they did, a poor man among the poor, giving away to them all his possessions, even his bed and clothes. During this time he began to paint. It would be of no use to compare his work with that of other artists to find out where he got his strange style from, because no one before him had ever painted as he did.

Wiggly lines, dots and dashes—that was how he painted, feverishly and quickly, piling on the paint thickly like butter, so that it dried in hard, craggy ridges which caught the light and cast tiny shadows, so that the picture glows and makes us feel something of the excitement he felt when he painted.



227. VAN GOGH : *A Road with Cypress-trees*

Collection V. W. van Gogh, Laren.

You have probably noticed that everything in *The Bedroom*, seems to be badly drawn. The pictures look as if they are falling off the wall, the legs of the table are of different thicknesses, and everything seems to be leaning at odd angles. But van Gogh never troubled about correct drawing. He let the

colour do everything in his pictures, and he concentrated only on giving us the 'feeling' of the scene. The perspective, too, seems wrong. The walls narrow too sharply by the window, and the floor slopes uphill. We have become so used to correct perspective in pictures that the deliberate ignoring of it comes as a shock. Here, says van Gogh, is a new way of painting, a new way of seeing things, and he painted and drew in a frenzy just how things appeared to him, trying to make us see them in the same way and make us feel as excited about them as he did. If it helped the picture at all he did not hesitate to distort the shapes of things and to give them colours which were not at all like their real colours.

On p. 202 is another of his pictures, *A Road with Cypress-trees*. See how the curved lines round the sun give a simple yet vivid impression of heat pouring from it. We can feel the quivering heat and smell the scorching earth, and the dark tree seems to be writhing beneath the sweltering sky. Never before have we seen pictures so saturated with sunshine. There is not a single straight line to be seen anywhere, only restless curves.

There is no calmness in his pictures, because van Gogh was not a calm-minded man. Like every other artist, he reveals in his work his inner nature and thoughts. He painted for only ten years, during which time he suffered from spells of insanity, and it was during one of these bouts that he met his death. One wonders if he would have painted like this or in some less vigorous manner, or even if he would have painted at all, had he been wholly sane. That he saw things as we cannot see them is obvious. But how many of us do see objects in the same way? If a dozen of you were asked to describe a landscape, how many of your descriptions would be alike? Some would see blue where others saw purple, or gold which others would insist was really a dull brown. So we should not say that a picture is badly drawn or coloured because we have never seen those shapes or colours.

19. *This Age of Experiment*

WE are very proud of the gigantic and rapid strides we are making towards what we hope will be a better world. 'Progress' is a word on every one's lips to-day, but not many of us can explain what we really mean or want by progress. But if we must progress at all, then we must do so in everything that affects our lives—social welfare, health, education, science, and so on. We can now travel faster than sound. From our arm-chairs we can see events happening miles away. We can speak from one corner of the earth to another. We live longer because of improvements in medicine and surgery. The list is endless, and we regard all these wonderful things as essential to our existence, and say to ourselves that life is getting more interesting and exciting every day, and what-will-they-think-of-next, and settle down to read the latest book on space-travel.

We do not regard any new invention as absurd even if we cannot understand how it works. But when 'Modern Art' is mentioned some people make rude remarks about it. Some get very angry, and others just shrug their shoulders and say that all artists are mad, anyway, so what else can we expect? Very few of us have the patience or the interest to try to understand the artist or his work. We cannot or will not realize that art too must keep in step with the times and change with men's ways of thinking and living. It is so easy to say that the paintings and sculptures of to-day are silly, but our saying so does not make them so. Certainly they are not absurd to the artist, and if we are patient we may in time come to see some sense and meaning in them.

Most people in his time failed to understand or like the work of William Blake because they had never seen anything like it before. They said that he was mad. It has taken a hundred years to learn to appreciate his genius. I wonder how long we shall have to wait before we see the work of our modern artistic 'madmen' acclaimed as the work of genius?

Many of us think that progress in art is unnecessary. We like the pictures of the Old Masters because we understand

them (or imagine we do !). Everything in them is plain to us. We recognize a tree, a figure, or an animal because they are true representations of those things, and we do not have to use our brains too much in reading the story they tell. But if our manners, our clothes, our foods, our means of transport, and many other things have changed so much since the beginning of our century, why should not painting, sculpture, and architecture change also ? Why should they stand still when everything else around them is moving rapidly along new roads ?

How, then, are we to regard the peculiar pictures and queerly shaped sculptures of to-day ? Why have the artists drifted so far from the long-established styles of painting and carving ? We may laugh at them, but we must remember that there are many people who get a great deal of pleasure from such work, people whose minds and eyes find in them something they like, something that we miss.

Many of us are frequently puzzled by some new painting which, we are told by those whose business it is to judge it, is the finest from Mr A's brush. We accept the judgment of these learned men, but we cannot help wondering why such a picture, which seems as meaningless and as confusing as all the others done by Mr A, should be considered his greatest work. How do they arrive at this conclusion ? What makes it more important than his other pictures ? Why do they like it when we can see nothing in it ?

I have said before that in every great work of art there is always something new. It is never a copying of what has already been done. If it were it could not be great, no matter how skilful a work it might be. A modern artist may look back and borrow something from the works of the masters of the past, but he also should look forward into the future. Like every great artist, he should be something of an inventor, devising new ways of seeing things and of presenting them, ready to make use of any new material that comes his way.

It is strange but true that we are able to understand the mind and work of a painter who lived three or four hundred years ago much better than the mind and work of an artist of to-day. We can see how the work of the former compares with what was painted before his time, and how much it influenced those who followed him. We know why he painted in his particular

style ; we know how his mind worked while he painted. Yet a painting of to-day (I do not refer to those portraits and landscapes which we can quickly recognize as such) often leaves us bewildered. What on earth does that strange mixture of blobs of colour and zigzag lines really mean ? And is the artist joking when he calls it a portrait of a man, when it isn't a bit like a man's face ? Why does he paint in this ridiculous manner ? We have asked a number of questions, but it isn't easy to find a simple answer to all of them.

If you wanted to get some idea of the size and magnificence of a large building like a Gothic cathedral you wouldn't go and press your nose against its wall. You would get as far away as possible, to a hill-top where you could look down on it and admire the graceful towers and pinnacles and compare it with other buildings around it. And that is why we cannot judge the value and meaning of modern art, because, living in the midst of it, our noses are pressed too close to it. We cannot get to a hill-top of the future from where we can see the greatness or the significance of it, or how much, if any, influence it will have on future art. Few people would be rash enough to prophesy that in time to come Mr A's paintings will be ranked with those of Raphael, or Mr B's sculptures acclaimed as being as good as or even better than Michelangelo's. And we must keep this in our minds as we read this chapter and look at the pictures.

For centuries artists have copied Nature, and their art is called *representational* art, which means that they painted what they saw as they saw it, representing things in their true shapes and colours. But the story of art is full of rebellious individuals like Giotto, El Greco, and Gauguin, and many others who saw things differently and insisted on painting them as they thought they should be painted. It is often the rebellious who bring about the greatest changes in our history, but not all rebellions are good for us or for the rebels. The Pre-Raphaelites rebelled and failed. The Impressionists were hearty rebels, yet the influence of their work is almost dead. Most of the greater artists of to-day have been rebels (and they still are), and all had to undergo a barrage of mockery and gibes at first because their work was disliked or misunderstood. They stood their ground, however, and now any of their new works are received with respect and interest, if not with understanding and admiration.

We have many fine artists to-day, but who among them could paint better portraits than those by Reynolds, Gainsborough, van Dyck, or Rubens? Or surpass the landscapes of Constable, Turner, or Claude? Perfection cannot be made more perfect, and to attempt such a task would end in merely imitating the works of these great masters. Obviously, then, something new, something *non-representational*, must be devised by the artist, something that has, apparently, nothing to do with Nature.

Now, if an artist decides he will no longer copy Nature, then he must invent new shapes and forms. But that is not such an easy thing to do as it may seem, because any shape you can think of will be found in Nature. Every 'new' shape you 'invent' will have in it, wholly or in part, a sphere, a cube, or a cylinder. I expect you have often 'doodled' with pencil and paper when, with only half your mind on your lesson or what your teacher is trying to get into your head, your hand busily created all sorts of funny faces and peculiar patterns and shapes. Have you ever noticed how many circles, squares, triangles, and other natural shapes there are in those scribbles? That proves, in a small way, how difficult it is to get away from Nature.

There is nothing wrong in the desire of the artist to be independent of Nature. Perhaps the shapes in his pictures do look odd, but does it matter very much as long as they present a colourful and pleasing design? Need we worry too much about the *meaning* of the picture? The carpet on your bedroom floor may have a nice, colourful design, but the design doesn't have any meaning. If you hung it on the wall like a picture (and that is what people used to do in the old days), would you immediately want to know the meaning of the design? So let us see how and why artists began to paint these strange pictures which worry and bewilder us so much.

You will remember, I hope, that it was Cézanne who said that all things in Nature were based on geometrical forms—the sphere, the cone, the cylinder, and the cube. This seemed an excellent idea to many artists who, shortly after his death in 1906, began to experiment with it, and finally evolved a style of painting that became known as Cubism.

Cubism gave to artists just what they wanted—the freedom to present things not as they saw them, but as they *felt* about them. They carried the geometrical scheme much further than Cézanne

ever dreamed of doing. They took natural shapes (being unable to invent new ones) and simplified them as much as they could. They distorted them, made them longer or shorter or squarer, cut them up into many planes, and arranged them in strongly defined, hard-edged shapes until the picture was composed of triangles, rectangles, squares, and sharp corners, forming a collection of clear, bold patterns in which you might or might not observe some resemblance to the object it was supposed to



228. PICASSO : *Lady in a Mantilla*

represent. Their aim was to do away with all curved lines, because, they said, a curved line suggested weakness, whereas a straight line gave an impression of strength. They scorned all the old traditions of painting, whether classic, romantic, or realistic, hoping that they would establish a style that would, in time, itself become traditional.

The Spanish painter Pablo Picasso, who painted the picture you see here, is recognized as one of the most famous artists of to-day.

He did not always paint like this. Many of his very early works show a more realistic and understandable treatment of his subject. Picasso, however, is not the kind of man who sticks to one special way of painting. As an experimenter I doubt whether he has ever been surpassed, although he wouldn't admit that he ever experimented. We never know what he will do next, and no other living artist arouses our wonder, irritation, or surprise as much as he.

Whatever we may think of this picture, we must admit that it is different from any other portrait we have seen so far. It is the artist's own expression of what he *feels* about the subject. It is his own creation in form and colour, and he has the creator's right to depict it in any way he chooses. He wanted to *construct* something, not merely copy what he saw. If he had drawn a realistic likeness of the woman he would have had to use realistic

colouring too, and then it would have been just one more portrait, like so many others that have been painted thousands of times before. But by dividing the face up into geometrical forms and using these triangles and squares in an unusual way to make an unrealistic face, he could also use unrealistic colours. Picasso has said that when he begins to paint he has no idea of what he is going to do or what the picture will be like when it is finished. So I suppose that the finished picture must be as startling to him as it is to us!

Another picture by Picasso shows the extent to which these geometrical shapes were used. He has taken two very simple objects, a glass and a pipe, and made of them something very mysterious and fascinating in a complicated series of shapes and colours. It is not as nice, perhaps, as a beautifully painted, true-to-life picture, with each object perfectly drawn and coloured, but



229. PICASSO : *Glass and Pipe*

we cannot help looking at it several times, because the very way it is presented holds our attention. We begin now to realize that there are more ways than one of looking at things. It is like a puzzle-picture in which you have to search for certain objects, but it is fairly easy to see the shape of the glass above the centre of the picture. The artist shows us not only the outside of the glass and pipe, but parts of the insides as well, and the tobacco is mixed up with parts of the glass. "Why present only one viewpoint?" asks Picasso. Why not show every viewpoint—top, bottom, sides, and insides? We know that they are there, so why not put them all together in one picture? This, you may remember, is more or less what the ancient Egyptians did when they drew some parts of the human figure front-view and some side-view.

It is only fair to Picasso to tell you that both these pictures are examples of his early work, when he was interested in the

Cubist experiment, but not greatly influenced by it. This was only one phase of many in his career. His more recent paintings are different again, and show us that he is still as fond of surprising us as he was forty years ago.

The Cubist phase did not last long, and no doubt Henri Matisse, who disliked this work, was not sorry to see the back of it. He was one of the most important painters at the beginning of this century, and, like Picasso, his earlier works were far

easier to understand than those he did later. His colours, however, make us like his pictures now, even if we think the actual drawing no better than that which any small child of average intelligence could do. But Matisse said that he always tried to convey in his pictures the simple and innocent outlook of a child.

Watch a young child with a box of paints and see how easily and confidently he daubs on his masses of brilliant colour, not at all worried if each one 'clashes' with the others. And see, too, how simple his designs are. A few firm lines and a circle or two, and 'Mummie' is portrayed. Now, Matisse's work is not quite so childish as that, but you will find in



230. MATISSE : *Large Interior in Red*
Musée de l'Art Moderne, Paris.

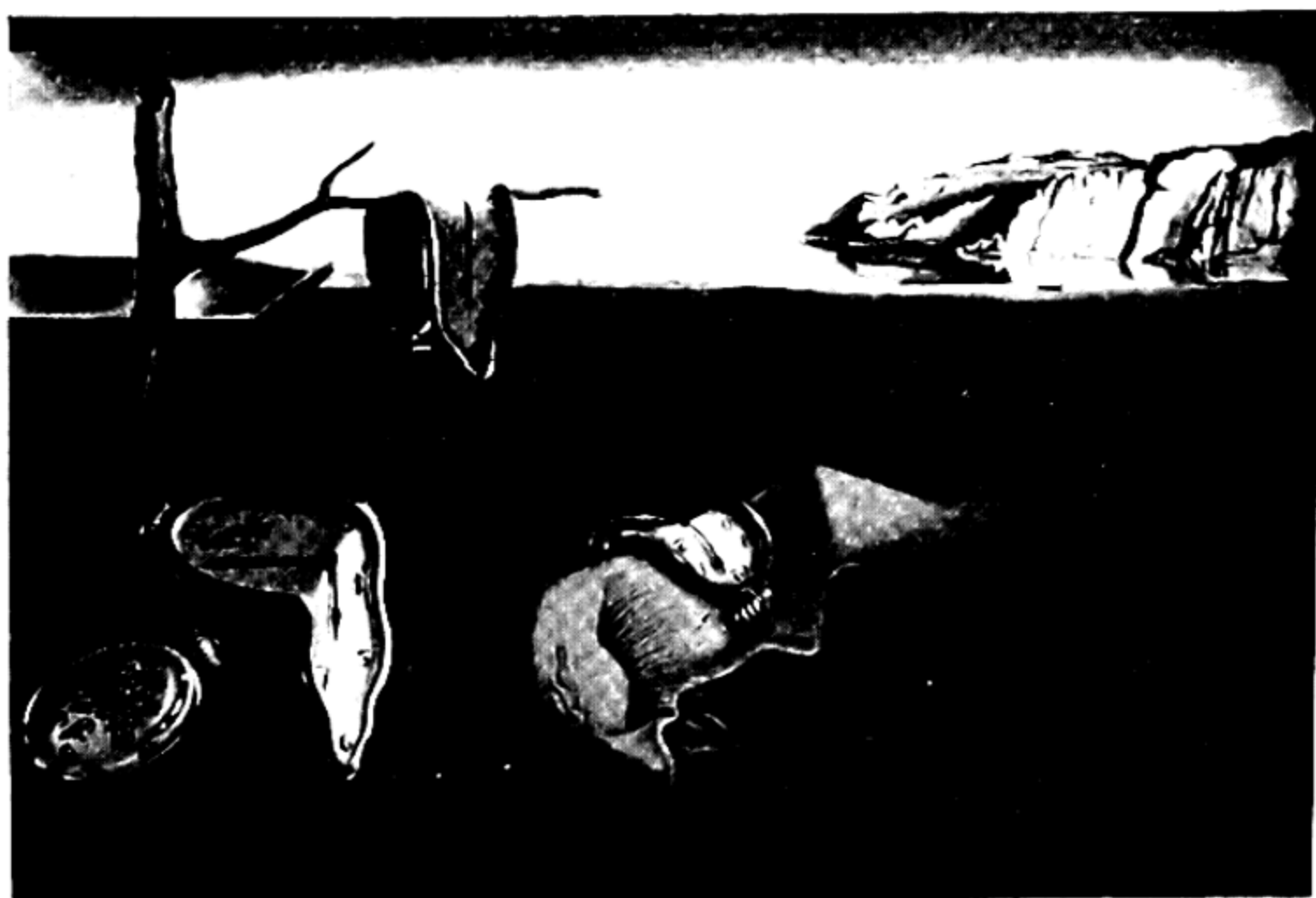
his pictures that a few sweeping lines to give movement, combined with large areas of colour, clear and bright, show that simplicity was his aim in painting. Realism was unimportant, and his pictures are a series of well-planned patterns arranged in an interesting design.

He was influenced by the simplicity of Gauguin's work, but he was a much better draughtsman than Gauguin. Matisse studied the colour-schemes and designs of Oriental carpets, and there is a reminder of these designs in all his pictures. In many ways they are easier to understand than Picasso's, because his

figures, sketchy though they are, can be recognized as figures. Some of them are very distorted, but these distortions help the rhythm of the picture and emphasize the movements.

As our story advances nearer to the present day we come upon other strange Schools of painting with very queer names, like Dadaism, Futurism, and many other 'isms,' none of which has made any great mark in the story of painting. We shall discuss only one of them, which was called Surrealism.

The Surrealist painters produced what were called 'dream'



231. A SURREALIST PICTURE—DALÍ: *The Persistence of Memory*
Museum of Modern Art, New York.

pictures, or, as some people have unkindly labelled them, nightmares. These artists painted what they claimed to see beyond reality, far beyond the things and scenes around them. They peered into a world of fantasy, seeing visions that occur only in dreams, or in what is called the subconscious mind. Everything in them, whether a shoe with a glass of milk standing in it or a watch melting like a blob of soft wax on the bough of a tree set in a lonely landscape that comes from another world, is a symbol which means more than I can explain simply enough for you to understand. No one can see, understand, or explain another man's visions and dreams, and we have to accept the artist's assurance that such things, weird and impossible as they may seem, have a meaning which is known only to him. We

can merely look at them and wonder. If they appear strange, unreal, and absurd . . . well, aren't our dreams sometimes like that ?

Every would-be modern painter at this time was joining one School or another, choosing whichever suited his particular ideas and tastes, and each received his share of comments, favourable and otherwise, from artistic and non-artistic critics alike. But there were some who preferred to play for safety, and clung to the more usual styles of painting portraits and landscapes, while



232. PAUL NASH : *Dead Sea*
Tate Gallery.

others found a pathway between the two extremes. Of these latter I have chosen to talk about Paul Nash, who died in 1946.

He too painted dream pictures, but they aren't quite so frightening or so depressing as some of the Surrealist pictures. His *Dead Sea*, a picture of wrecked German aircraft strewn along a lonely seashore, has, however, in spite of the pale sunshine, something cold, eerie, and sinister about it. A deathly stillness reigns over the scene, where the broken mechanical bodies lie rotting and rusting beneath a sombre sky. There is a wave-like movement suggested by the tilted wings, which is repeated in the jagged shadow on the ground, the frozen, stilled waves of a dead sea. Like Matisse and Picasso, Paul Nash painted what he felt, and here he tells us of the horror he felt at the desolation and misery brought by war to a peaceful countryside. In such a picture the deep feeling of the artist is as powerful as his skill in painting.

Since he cannot invent new shapes, the artist has to be content with those Nature possesses. So we come to another style of painting, a style that absolutely defies description or explanation. It is known as 'Abstract Art.' We must keep in our minds one very important fact—that the word 'abstract' is the name given to this form of art, and is not a description of it. In these

paintings the artist tries to tell us of his mood or emotion, the way he felt at the time of painting, by means of lines, circles, squares, and other shapes all overlapping one another to make a design that may be as pleasing as the design on your carpet, but the meaning of which is known only to the artist. It may sometimes take the form of a large rectangle of colour, perhaps yellow, with a large black square in one corner and a small white one in another, and several red lines crossing over each other somewhere else. But what his mood was when the artist painted it we cannot tell,



233. AN 'ABSTRACT' PICTURE — ADRIAN HEATH: *Curved Forms*

any more than we can guess at what it all means. It is almost impossible to say what form an 'abstract' picture should take, because it would seem that practically any whim or fancy of the artist may be put down on the canvas, and his explanation of it, if he has one to offer, will mean little or nothing to us. The artist wants to be different, to be free to play with colour and shapes, turning them this way and that. He is truly an inventor, perhaps not in his method of paintings, but most certainly in his ideas and in his way of presenting them.

It is a purely non-representational style of painting which doesn't make us feel anything or stir us in any way, no matter

how long we look at these pictures, whether they are hung the right way up, upside down, or even sideways. Nevertheless, there is about them a quality of design, balance, and symmetry not only in the arrangement of the shapes, but in the placing of the colours also, that makes us look at them more than once, and wonder if, after all, there is 'something in them.'

Have you ever looked at a familiar object and suddenly realized that it seems, somehow, different? That sounds rather an absurd question, but perhaps if I give you an example you will be able to see what I mean. Let us imagine that there is a particular stone in your garden, one that you have seen every day ever since you can remember. There is nothing odd about this stone, no funny shape or peculiar colour to make it more noticeable than any other, but one day you looked at it and it seemed to have changed. It looked different in every way, almost as if you'd never seen it before. This difference was not due to some trick of your eyes. It might have been due to the mood you were in at the time of seeing it. You may have had that mood before, whether it was one of happiness or dejection, but you hadn't looked at the stone then. What I am trying to tell you is that when we look at well-known objects in certain states of mind we see them differently. Seeing that particular stone in that particular state of mind at that particular moment, you see it as you've never seen it before. The impression may be only a fleeting one, but your mind has captured it, and you cannot easily forget it. The shape of the stone, its colour, the angle at which it lies, fits in with your feelings of the moment.

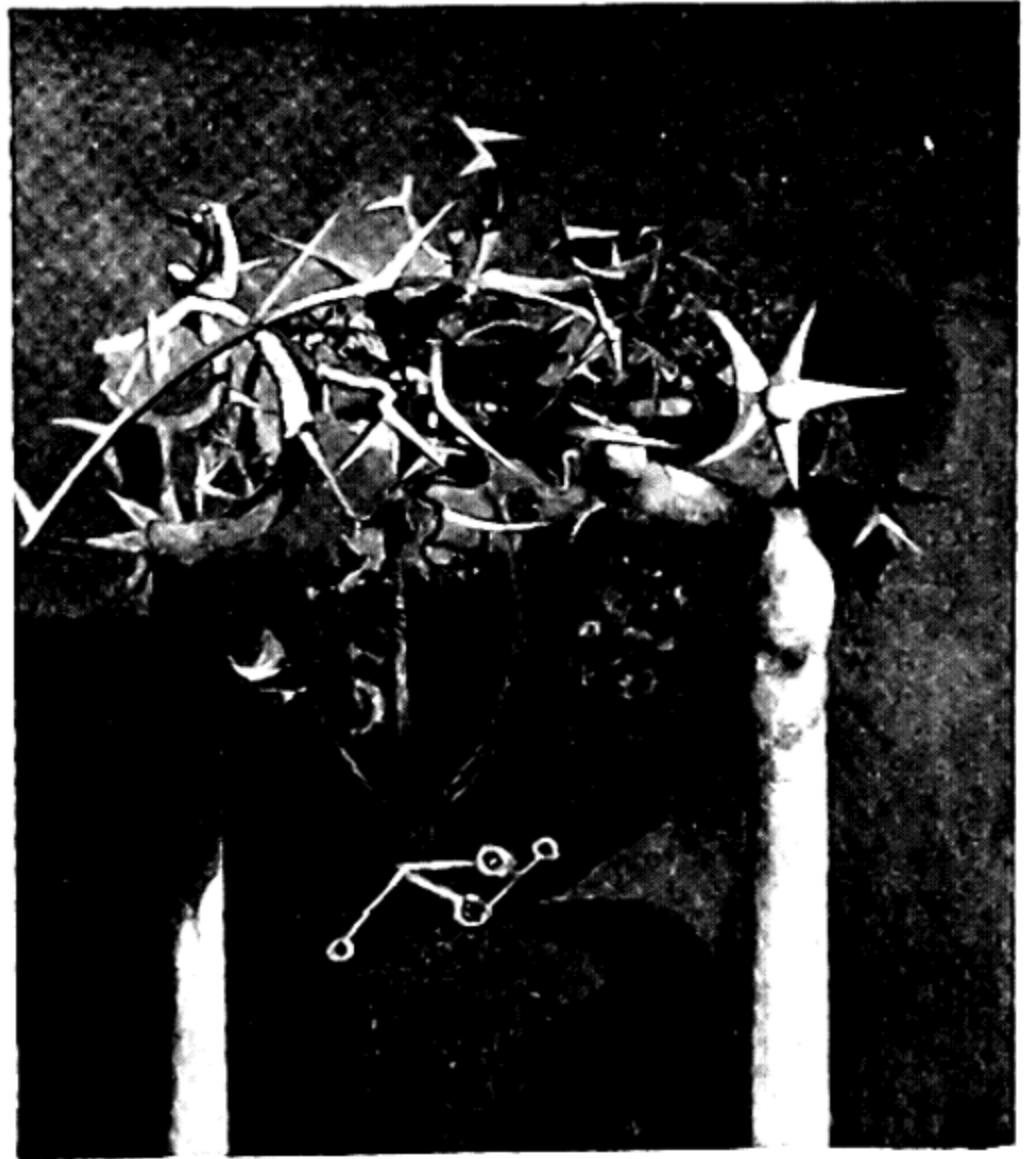
This, I know, must sound dreadfully complicated to you, but it is really quite simple when you think about it. You may often have read a jolly story, one that you know by heart and yet thoroughly enjoy each time you read it, because you are in the right mood for it. But try to read the same story when you aren't feeling very well or when you are worried about your exams, and the story will suddenly seem stupid and irritating and somehow different. That is because your mood now is not suited to it. Do you see now how easily the appearance of familiar things can alter with our moods?

All this brings us to one of the most prominent of English painters of to-day, Graham Sutherland, who paints what his mood dictates, but not as the 'abstract' painters do, with

squares, circles, and lines. Though he too is an 'abstract' painter, Sutherland is interested in all natural forms such as plants, rocks, broken-tree-trunks, in which he sees shapes and colours which create whole pictures in his mind. For him the world is filled with mysterious things, strange in form and colour.

While on a country walk he will notice some quite ordinary thing, such as the twisted root of a tree, a peculiar stone, a gorse-bush or a thorn-tree, things familiar to us, but which we ignore, seeing nothing unusual about them, and pass by knowing them to be what they are and nothing more. But Sutherland sees them differently. To him they present certain forms and shapes in patterns of light and colour. He makes drawings of them, and later reforms and reshapes these drawings until they look entirely unlike the objects they depict, but more real to him than the actual objects. He does not make realistic pictures of them, but gives us realistic pictures of the sensations he felt when he saw them at a certain moment. His picture of a thorn-tree is hardly recognizable as a thorn-tree, and yet we see in it the suggestion of something cruel, prickly, and unpleasant to touch. It isn't as you and I would draw it, yet we are convinced that this is a picture of a thorn-tree as it really is.

A great artist is an interpreter of his age. That is, either deliberately or unconsciously, he will put into his work the spirit and mood of his time. And in his deeply impressive and striking *Crucifixion* Sutherland records the harshness, the doubts, and the religious indifference of our day. It is both a reminder and a rebuke to us. The spikiness of it and the

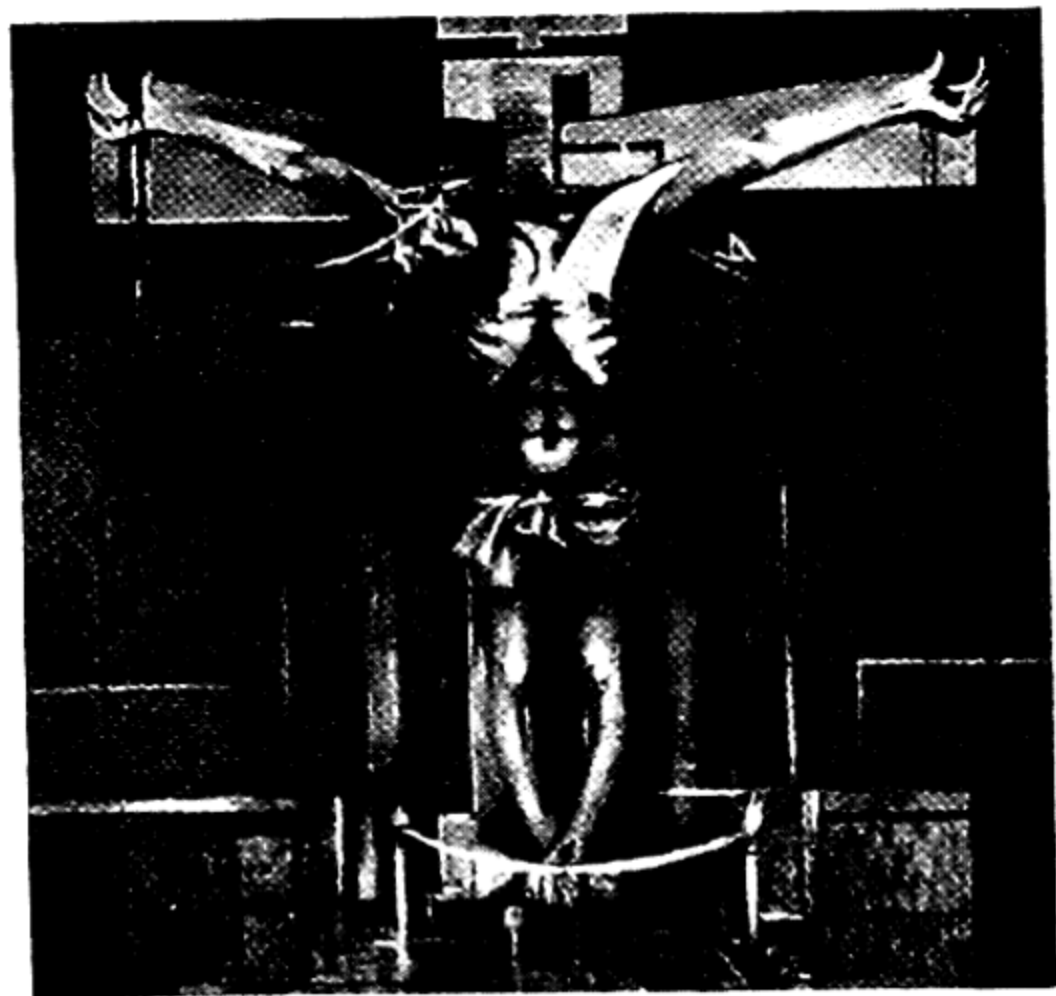


234. SUTHERLAND : *Thorn-trees*
British Council.

distorted pose of the figure create a vivid impression of torture and pain.

What has been said about modern painting may also, to a certain extent, be said about modern sculpture. Both painters and sculptors of to-day feel that they want to create something which has never been done before, and every artist worthy of his profession wants to do this.

It is comparatively easy to make an object or figure look



235. SUTHERLAND : *Crucifixion*
St Matthew's Church, Northampton.

realistic in paint or marble, but to present them in some new way is far from easy. With this wish to break away from all the old ideas of presentation, it appears that sculptors and painters have ceased to work according to any definite plan. "Here is a canvas," says the painter. "I want to cover it with paint. I haven't any idea of what I'm going to do, but I hope it will give me something!" And the sculptor looks at his

block of stone or marble or wood. Should he carve an animal, a man or a woman, or a group of figures? He waits for the block of material to give him his answer. Maybe the shape of the stone suggests something; or the softness or hardness of it may help him to make up his mind. To decide on his subject first and then begin work is not always the modern sculptor's way of setting about his task.

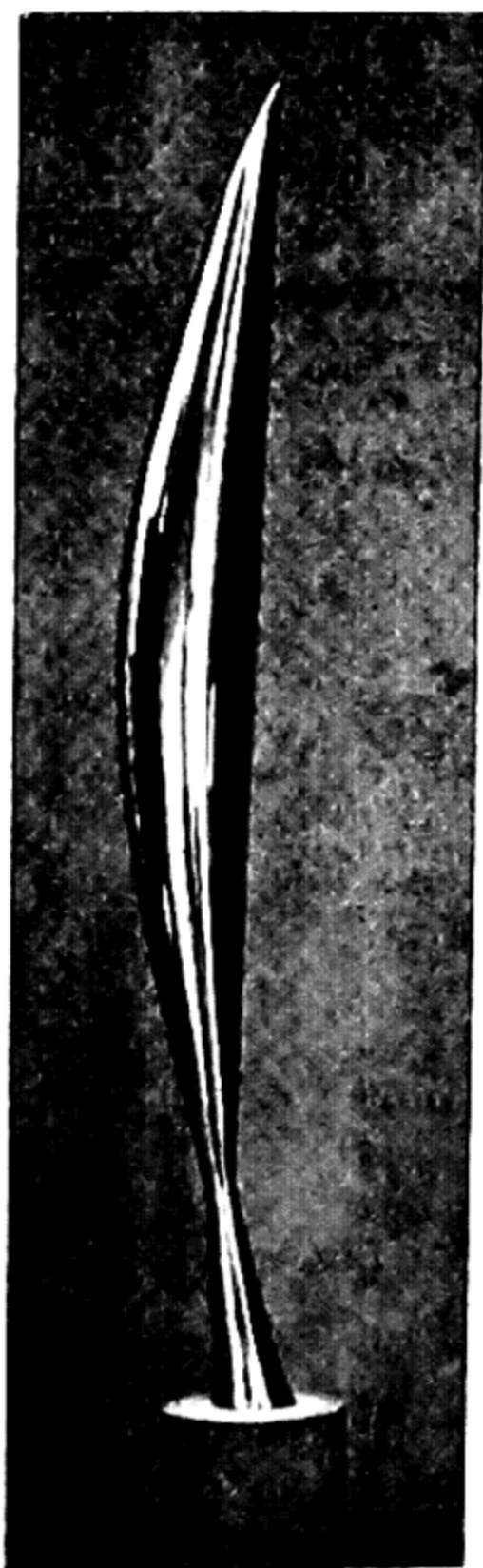
Now, all this makes it seem as if the artist starts working without thinking first, which, of course, no one in his right mind would do. Canvas and stone are not cheap things to buy, and cannot afford to be wasted. So obviously the artist must have, somewhere in his mind, a reason for what he does, and must consider it worth doing.

Let us go back to the beginning of the century, when Rodin was at the height of his fame, and try to discover why the

sculptors of to-day carve figures with holes in them and strange objects which seem to have no relationship to their titles. Rodin was acclaimed as being as great as Phidias, Donatello, and Michelangelo. Then suddenly there came a revolt against the vivid realism of his style. This revolt spread and grew, until to-day representational or realistic sculpture is regarded as unpleasant and lacking in imagination. I will not go into the many learned arguments that have been used to support or condemn this revolution, because I doubt whether I could simplify them enough for you to understand them. Let us, then, accept the fact that sculptors, like the painters, have departed from all the traditions of their art, and in this age of experiment have completely changed their styles and their ways of thinking, and are continually trying out new materials and new ways of presentation.

In 1919, two years after Rodin's death, Constantin Brancusi, a Rumanian artist and a pioneer in 'abstract' form in sculpture, produced his bronze *Bird in Space*. No, it doesn't look a bit like a bird. There are no outspread wings to suggest flight, no head, no feet. But look at that peculiar shape again. Doesn't it give you a sense of graceful movement, of speed, of an object flying through the air? The artist might have made it like a box or a triangle, but this long, elliptical shape somehow manages to convey just the impression he desired. It is a clever piece of work, but the question is—can it be called sculpture, the sort of sculpture we should expect to see with such a title? As a representation of 'flight' or 'floating' it serves its purpose, but as a bird. . . . It could just as well be called "A Scrap of Paper floating in the Air."

One sculptor whose work we can more easily understand is Sir Jacob Epstein. He too approached sculpture from a different angle, and his efforts



236. BRANCUSI: *Bird in Space*

Museum of Modern Art
New York.

succeeded very well in arousing intense dislike, discussion, enthusiasm, and bitter opposition. He was an admirer of Rodin's earlier works, and although influenced by them, his idea of realism is very different from Rodin's. To those who disliked it his work appeared archaistic—that is, too much like that of the mediæval carvers who adorned the cathedrals with statues that were simple and monumental in style. But he did not copy them; it would be wiser to say that he rediscovered their style and interpreted it in his own way.

When his statue of *Christ* was exhibited in 1920 it gave quite a shock to many people. This wasn't anything like the usual representation of Our Lord. This was no Man with long, wavy hair, a gentle face, and wearing the garments in which He had been depicted by centuries of painters and carvers. Instead, there was this huge, gaunt, rugged figure, rigid in its

winding-sheet, attracting by its compelling power and monumental effect. The head is thrown back, and the face is that of a man who has suffered terribly both bodily and mentally. The expression in those pain-filled eyes seems to challenge us as we look into them. Even the deliberately large hands create a sense of pain as a finger points to the wound in the palm. This was Epstein's idea of the Saviour, completely unlike anything seen before, and not many people liked it.

His bronze portrait-busts are as rugged as this figure, but the ruggedness creates deep shadows and adds to the suggestion of life and force. All of Epstein's early work was apt to startle and shock and upset our pet ideas of what things should look like. Perhaps he doesn't shock us quite so much now, because we realize that his work so well expresses the idea he tries to convey. He says so many ordinary things in an extraordinary way because he has a true creative power, full of



237. EPSTEIN: *Christ*

conviction and intense originality. He is no longer a rebel, and his work does not cause quite such a stir as once it did.

There are some who now regard his style as outdated and old-fashioned. Perhaps it is. I leave it to you to form your own opinion on this, and to decide whether you prefer sculpture which you can understand at least a little bit, or the peculiarly shaped or shapeless masses of stone which are to-day regarded by the world of art as sculpture in its most refined and highest form.

Brancusi's *Bird in Space* was one of the early examples of non-representational art brought about by the revolt against Rodin's work. Many more were to follow, each becoming more and more unintelligible to the average person like you and me, until to-day we have 'sculptured' works made up of pieces of steel, wire, iron, bits of wood, plastics, glass, tin, cement, and goodness knows what else, twisted into all kinds of strange shapes and forms. Reg Butler's spidery *Boy and Girl*, made in 1950, is, perhaps, one of the

best examples of such work. That this iron group represents human figures is fairly easy to see; that one of the figures is seated and the other standing is also reasonably obvious. But there the resemblance to human figures in human attitudes ends. I would not attempt to explain why these caricatures are called boy and girl rather than two praying-mantises enjoying a cosy gossip. Whether we like it or not is beside the point. We must regard it as something new not only in style and material, but also in representation. Up to a point it is typical of the age in which we live, an age which is for ever seeking something new.

One of the outstanding and most interesting men in sculpture to-day is Henry Moore. He is one of those artists who, before he



238. EPSTEIN: *Bronze Bust of a Girl*

starts work, considers the nature of his material first, studying its hardness or softness and calculating how it will act under the chisel. He then proceeds to carve what the block of stone may suggest to him—a group of figures or a single figure. But he always tries to preserve the simplicity and solidity of the stone itself, to make not a figure of stone, but a stone which suggests a figure.



239. REG BUTLER: *Boy and Girl*
Arts Council.

How, then, you may ask, does one piece of stone suggest a *Madonna and Child* and another such a strange thing as *Recumbent Figure*?

Well, the *Madonna and Child* may not have been actually suggested by the shape or nature of the stone, but the stone may have settled his mind on the form it should take. It was specially commissioned for the interior of a church, where it had to blend with Gothic arches and plain walls, so therefore it had to be more or less realistic. Its treatment is simple, and the exaggerations, such as the large hands and feet, and the simplicity of the folds of the dress, are reminders of the work of the mediæval carvers.

But the *Recumbent Figure* is obviously intended for display out of doors. Henry Moore has said that for him the curious shapes and natural holes in stone have the mysterious fascination of caves in

hillsides and cliffs. A stone is often rounded, worn into holes and its edges smoothed by wind and rain, and the sculptor has endeavoured here to give us not the natural shape of a woman, but the smoothness and roundness that Nature gives to a centuries-old stone. Thus the figure closely resembles the shape and surfaces that Nature, had she the mind and hands of a man, would have sculptured, and out of doors it blends well with trees and hills.

I have mentioned very few of the sculptors of to-day, and have in no way gone deeply into the whys and wherefores of

their particular styles. It is not an easy subject to talk about, because of the many varied opinions held about such work. Many of the leading critics condemn present-day sculptors, some praise them, and we, who are not qualified to judge them, but can only say whether we like them or not, are at a loss to understand fully either critic or artist.

For some reason or another we never get into a rage over the design of a new building, no matter how hideous it may be. But we do object strongly to a sculptured figure looking unlikelike. Anything out of the ordinary irritates us. Yet do we really prefer the smooth and very realistic sculptured works of the last century? Aren't they just as irritating in their way, with their heavy sentiment and too-perfect proportions?

When you visit your local park again have another look at that lonely statue which stands in a patch of green grass. It is of some past mayor of the town (nearly every town can boast of such a statue), with his chain of office around his neck, standing, with one foot placed slightly in front of the other, in an attitude of dignity and authority, in his hand a scroll, behind him a chair. (And probably a bird's nest in the crook of his elbow!) It's a very nice statue



240. MOORE : *Madonna and Child*

St Matthew's Church, Northampton.



241. MOORE : *Recumbent Figure*

in its way, well executed and a very good likeness of the worthy gentleman. But how often do we look at it and admire it? In our heart of hearts we decided long ago that, in spite of its good qualities, it is really a very ordinary piece of work, and shows

absolutely no imagination. The very fact that we never give it a glance now is in itself an expression of our opinion of it.

But what alternative have we to offer? Will our statues of public figures some day be like those of Reg Butler or Henry Moore? Judging by what the sculptors are doing to-day, it would be very unwise to say that such a possibility is unlikely. It will take many years for us to become educated to the extent where we can accept the extraordinary as being very ordinary, and when we are able to do that we shall immediately protest if a sculptor produces a figure that is recognizable as a figure!

Not many of us may have the opportunity of seeing the works of our sculptors and painters, but it is impossible not to see how the architects and builders are rapidly altering the appearance of our streets.

By the way they have built men have shown all through history the way they lived and thought, and the stage of civilization they had reached. And we do the same to-day. In mediæval times the people built their huts and houses around the walls of the castle in which lived their lord and master and protector, who allowed them to till and farm his lands in return for some of their produce. Later, when life became more peaceful and settled, it was around the church they clustered. To-day it is the factory which is surrounded by the homes of the workers.

In the nineteenth century nearly all architects believed that if a building was built in some style from the past it could not be anything else but beautiful. As we have read, the result of such narrow-mindedness was not at all pleasing. Then, after years of erecting imitation Greek, Gothic, and Renaissance buildings, they became not quite so sure that they were right in their beliefs. They decided that if they designed their buildings, whether hospitals, factories, blocks of flats, or offices, to suit their special purposes, and did this successfully, they were bound to be beautiful. By this they meant that if a hospital looked like a hospital, and not like an Early English church or a Greek temple, then it was sure to look nice in every way. The idea of a building being designed for its special purpose was a good one, and to a certain extent they succeeded in their aims. But they forgot one very important thing—that beauty also is one of the special purposes of architecture. Beauty is rarely achieved accidentally. It has to be thought about and planned along with all the other things. Nineteenth-century architects were

still inclined to have too much decoration and unnecessary trimmings on their buildings, and the planning of the buildings did not always make for greater efficiency. But their ideas were sound, and they introduced several very good improvements. On the whole, however, they did not produce anything which could be called great architecture.

With all the new materials used in building to-day, materials unknown a hundred years ago, such as plastics, bitumen, rubber, asbestos, aluminium, and steel and reinforced concrete, it is only natural that the buildings themselves should differ considerably from those of the last century. But one of the chief causes for this difference in appearance is the change in our tastes and needs.

Your Victorian great-grandparents were no lovers of fresh air, as you will see if you look through the family photograph album. With their style of dress, they simply gave a breeze no chance to get anywhere near their bodies. At night thick curtains were pulled across the closed and tightly shuttered windows, and any stray breath of air that dared to wander into the room could drift hopelessly all night round and round the heavy curtains that shut their beds off from the rest of the room, where, in winter, a huge fire crackled and roared in the large grate.

Nowadays we know the value of fresh air and sunshine, and even the most town-minded of us likes to fill his lungs with country air at week-ends and holidays. We like to see plenty of trees and flowers, to feel the wind on our bodies when we sunbathe, to walk on grass not only in the country, but in town as well. We want more open spaces for recreation, where we can go to get away from the cliffs of brick and mortar that surround us.

The difficulty is, however, that in our overcrowded cities we haven't much room for more parks and open spaces, so, if we must have a roof over our heads, *and* grass under our feet when we go out, we have to alter our ideas of building. We cannot spread out, so we must go higher.

Thus to-day many an Englishman's castle is not, as once it was, a small semi-detached villa with a garden back and front, but a group of three or four rooms with similar groups of rooms above, below, and on each side of him. Out of his sun-trap windows (windows built into the corners of the room to catch as much sunlight as possible) he looks out upon well-kept stretches of grass with a few young trees. He thus has his grass to walk

on and a roof over his head, and he shares both with hundreds of other people.

Our towns now have plenty of these wide-windowed, balconied blocks of flats with labour-saving rooms, spacious lawns, gardens, and trees, and most of them are excellent examples of sensible design and careful planning.

It is not only the outward appearance of our homes that has changed in accordance with our tastes and needs. The interiors,



242. A MODERN BLOCK OF FLATS

too, have altered a great deal. For instance, in Victorian days you went to one room to dine and to another to rest in afterwards and listen to little Harriet and Albert play a duet on the piano. Nowadays, in larger houses, dining-rooms and drawing-rooms are not so popular. Instead they are combined

into one large room, a lounge, where meals are eaten and there is no need to withdraw to another room to watch the television. Such houses help to make life easier and lazier, but they have no real national character. That is, you cannot say that they are typically English, as, for instance, was the English form of Gothic architecture. With their sun-balconies, terrace-gardens, and flat roofs, they are almost identical with houses that you would see in any large town on the Continent.

It is inevitable that in this industrial age most of our new buildings should be factories. There are a large number of new industries flourishing to-day which were unknown even only fifty years ago, and each of these needs a special type of building, well-lit, well-ventilated, and with not an inch of floor-space wasted. A factory which turns out hundreds of motor-cars a week needs a quite different kind of building from one in which vacuum-cleaners, radio sets, or toys are made. Every new industry therefore sets its own particular problems for the architect, who has to design his buildings to fit the purposes they have to serve, and know how to make the best possible use of all the new materials at hand.

At the beginning of the century concrete was once more

used in building. (You will remember that the Romans were the first to discover and use this material.) With its return came also the introduction of steel for constructional purposes, and both these materials demanded an entirely new type of architecture, and raised many new problems which haven't been fully solved yet. But they have both helped to bring more life and vitality into architecture than we have seen for a long time.

In the wooden buildings of the past the floors were of planks of wood resting on wooden joists, or beams. These floors were not strong enough to support any but very light walls, so the walls of the upper rooms had to be built on to those of the lower ones. Again, timber was too weak to span a large space without support of some kind, so naturally the rooms had to be very small. But with the use of reinforced-concrete floors with a few steel columns here and there to support them, the rooms can be as large as you wish, and the floors strong enough to carry walls wherever they are needed, so that the arrangement, sizes, and shapes of the rooms on one floor can be different from those on the floors above or below it.

Of all the materials used to-day, steel and reinforced concrete are the most important, and together they have influenced the forms of buildings more than any of the others. They are important because they are used in the actual construction of the building, and everything else depends upon their successful use. The steel girders are all cut to the required lengths and shapes in a factory, taken to the site, hoisted into position, and riveted together. Now, these girders form what we can call the bones or skeleton of the building, and on them the brick or stone walls and floors are built. The walls can be regarded as the skin which covers and protects the bones. Such a method, where the strength of the building lies in the skeleton, permits the use of thin walls, which, of course, allow more floor-space. The walls being built on these girders, which are much stronger than timber, the building may be carried to any height. In mediæval times, when buildings were all of stone, the walls of the lower floor had to be very thick to carry the weight of the upper part of the house, and naturally they took up much valuable floor-space. Imagine a poor and worried twelfth-century builder struggling with the task of erecting a five- or six-storey building ! Even his smallest houses had very thick

walls, so you can imagine the thickness of the walls of the ground floor of his tall building—probably fifteen to twenty feet or even more !

Most factories have heavy machinery, and this has to be borne in mind by the architect when he designs the building. A part of a floor may have to carry a machine weighing several tons. Now, an ordinary concrete floor will crack or bend if too heavy a weight rests upon it, so it has to be reinforced. That is, it must be given additional strength to prevent its collapsing. A mould or casing of the exact size of the part of the floor on which the machine will rest is made of wood or



243. A MODERN SCHOOL
Catford County Secondary School.

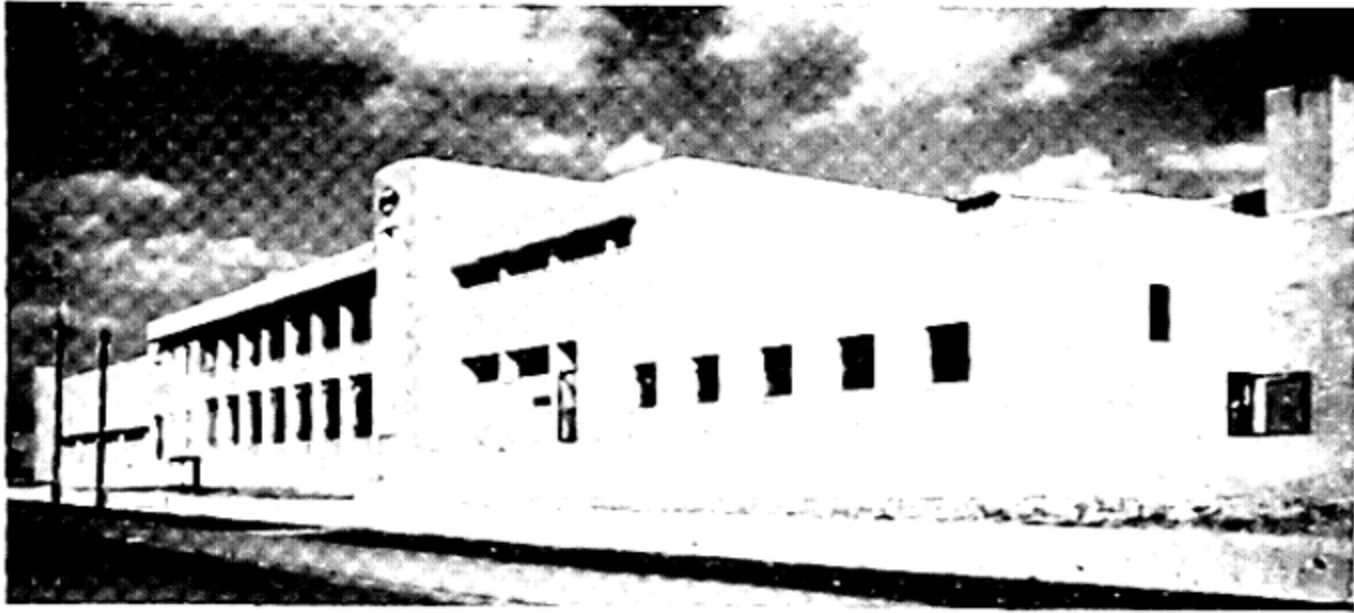
steel, and long steel rods are placed in certain positions in this mould. The concrete, which is in a semi-liquid form, is then poured in and allowed to set hard. It sounds very simple, doesn't it ? But this work calls for great skill and accurate calculation of the amount of reinforcing necessary in each instance.

The advantages of reinforced concrete are many. Casings can be made of complete arches and columns, or parts of them, of sections of floors and walls in any shape and size, far away from the site of the building and carried there later and fixed into position. Also any decorative ornament, large or small, can be repeated as often as required, and the saving of time and labour is obvious.

In the erecting of these buildings the aim is always for greater simplicity. No longer are the fronts covered with a mass of meaningless decorations to attract our attention. Instead, they do so by their clean and simple beauty of outline, and they don't pretend to be anything but what they are. As buildings

have always done during every period of man's history, these austere, matter-of-fact structures express the spirit of our industrial and scientific age.

Although most of them are of reinforced concrete, others are of brick covered with cement to look like concrete. Such



244. A MODERN BUS GARAGE

buildings, plain and gleaming white, may look very nice in sunny, clean-aired countries like Greece, Italy, or Israel, but in this country, with its fogs and smoky atmosphere, they soon begin to look dingy and much older than they really are. Besides, the cement coating often cracks after a time, and makes the building look shabby and neglected.

Glass too is used a great deal in building to-day, with, sometimes, pleasing effects, especially in cinemas, big stores, milk-bars, restaurants, and blocks of offices. Glass bricks make the rooms brighter, and at the same time prevent people outside seeing into the rooms. Outer walls are often cased in thick slabs of coloured glass.

Among the pictures shown here, all of them examples of architecture designed for special purposes, is one of London University. This building gains its effect not by a display of decorative ornament, but by the skilful placing of its many windows. Its skyscraper

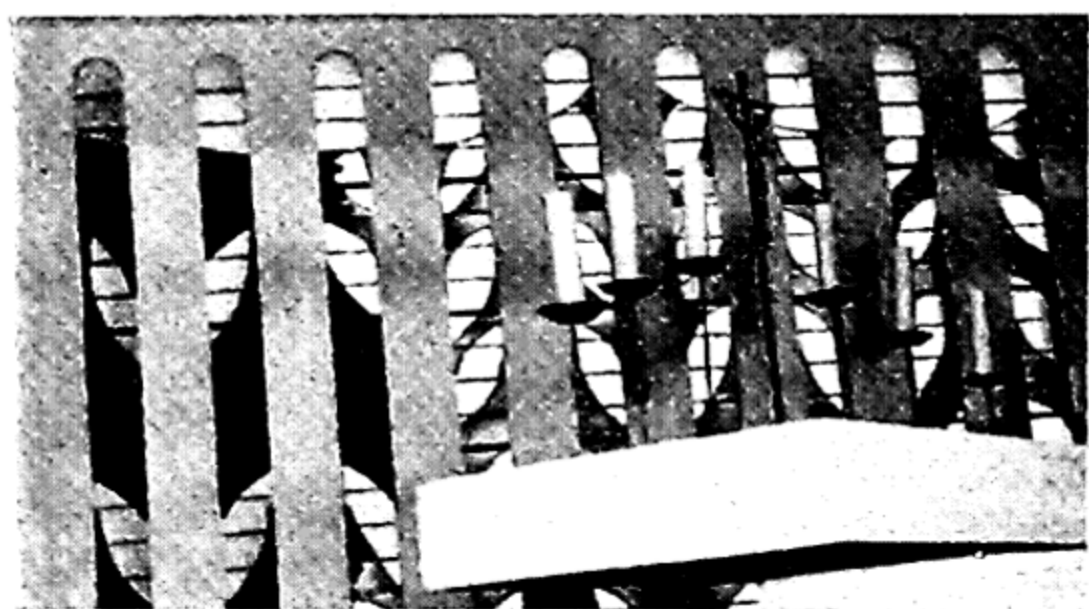


245. SENATE HOUSE, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

appearance is obviously due to American influence, and the 'stepping' of the upper floors gives shape and modelling to the structure. The architect of to-day relies more upon such modelling to give a good effect than on details of decoration, and he is thus able to give character to modern architecture.

Even the designing of churches has for some time been undergoing a startling and breath-taking change, especially on the Continent. We have no difficulty in adapting ourselves to our boxlike blocks of flats, glass and chromium super-cinemas, and sleek, business-like factories. Somehow they all fit in so easily with our tastes and ways of life. But we are apt to be slightly shocked when we come upon a church that isn't 'Gothic,' or at least a little as we think a church should look. And, strangely enough, the people who are loudest in their protests against the 'modernizing' of church architecture are usually those who so readily accuse the Church of being old-fashioned, behind the times, out of touch with the modern world!

Well, Matisse (we've met him before) has certainly given us something to look at and think about in his church at Vence, in France. It doesn't appear very extraordinary at first glance. In fact, from the outside we should never suspect that it was so very different from any other church, for it is quite simple in plan and looks a homely, inviting building, although its blue-and-white tiled roof, with its tall, spindly iron cross, may seem a little unusual. Inside, however, we soon see that Matisse has given free rein to his love of colour and exotic designs, with queerly patterned stained-glass windows and pictures of saints drawn in black on white tiles with his customary simplicity of line. That such an interior, modern in every sense of the word in design and decoration, can blend so well with the mediæval dress of the Dominican monks who worship in it is in itself no small achievement. As a bold experiment it is considered highly



246. DOMINICAN CHAPEL AT VENCE: WINDOW DESIGNS BY MATISSE

successful, and those of us who like it can only hope that all attempts to bring up-to-date the future buildings of the ancient Church will be equally successful.

Always, in all the arts, new orders of beauty continually arise. Like painting and sculpture, architecture is still experimental, and none of us can tell what it will be like in a hundred years' time. The Norman builder, erecting his thick pillars, could not imagine that the time would soon come when churches would have very thin columns and wide, lofty windows, and be much taller than his own buildings. New materials will be discovered or invented, new ideas will be formed, ways of living and thinking will change, and all these will bring about a new beauty in architecture. For centuries man has striven for beauty in the works he has created with his hands and mind, and he will go on doing so for as long as he exists, for as long as he has the desire to paint, carve, and build, and create things of beauty from the sheer joy of being alive. Every age gives him fresh opportunities to express his ideas of beauty.

This is the end of *our* story, but the story itself is by no means finished. We've read a lot of words and looked at a lot of pictures, but we have barely brushed the surface of this vast subject, and much has been left untold. It is you who will carry on this wonderful story, for it is from your hands that the pictures, the carvings, and the buildings of the future will come. And who knows but that among you who read this book may be another Giotto or Michelangelo or Sir Christopher Wren?



247. DOMINICAN CHAPEL AT VENCE: A MATISSE DECORATION

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